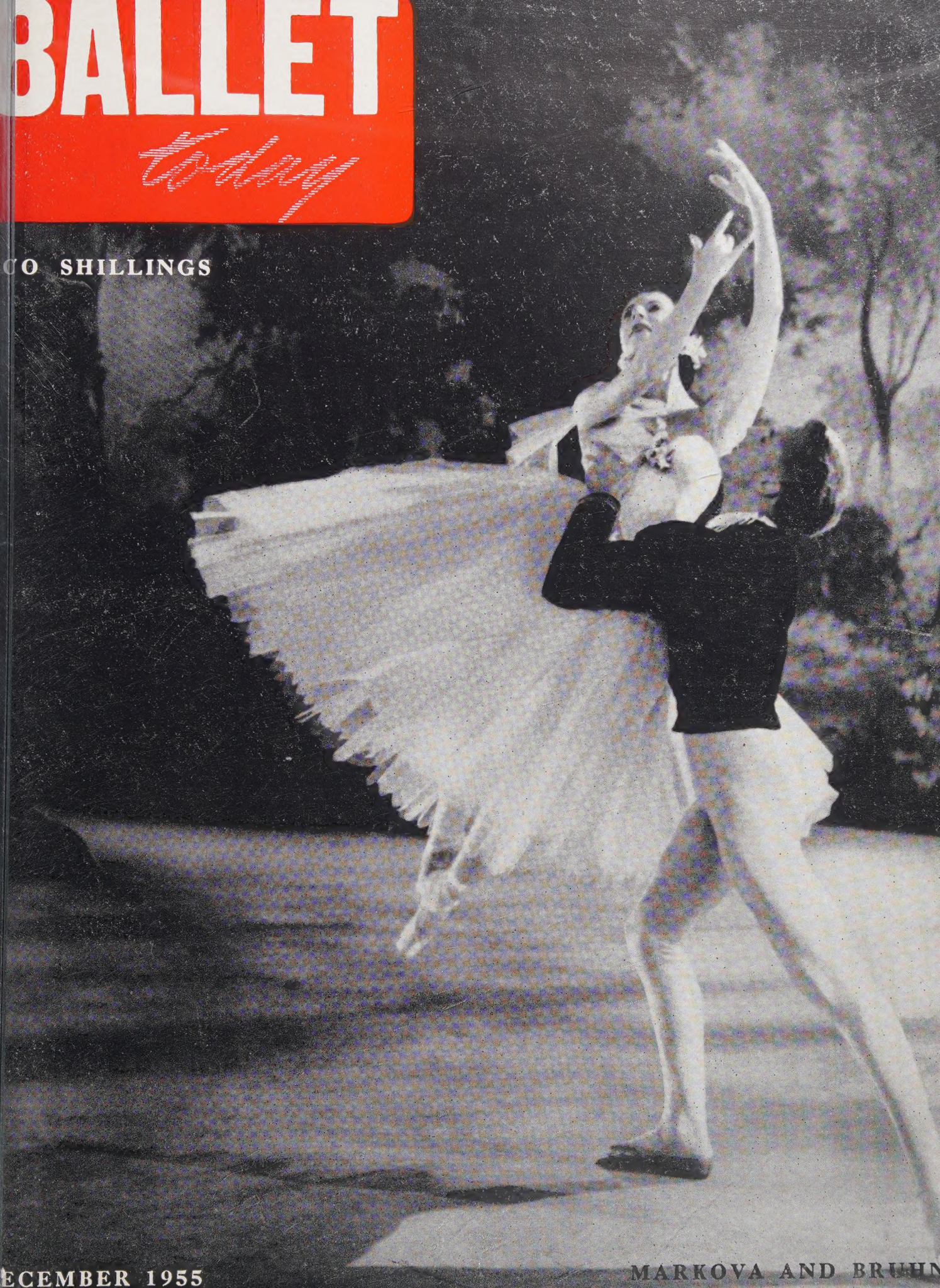


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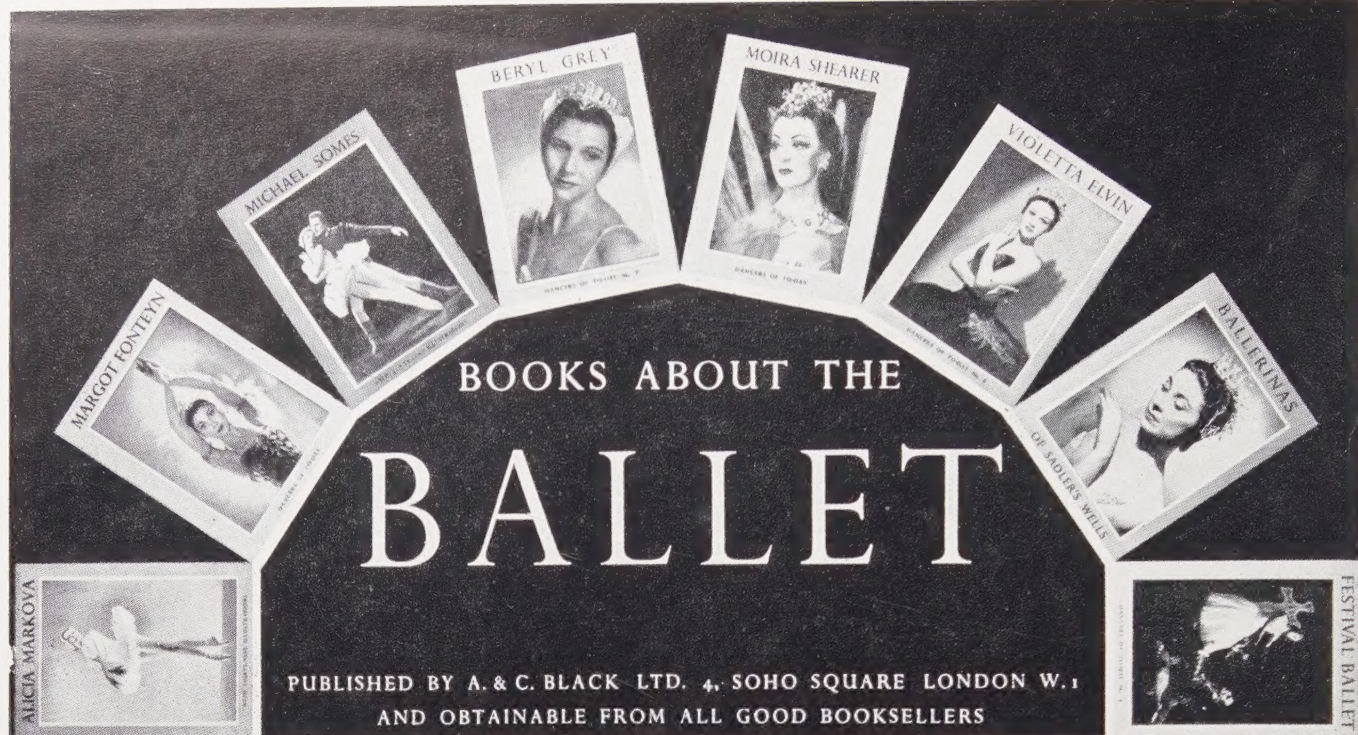
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Ballet Today

Christmas

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to all

our Readers



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Cover Portrait

ALICIA MARKOVA—ERIK BRUHN

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SVETLANA BERIOSOVA

Photos—Mike Davis

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News from

HOPE SHERIDAN FROM NEW YORK

Fonteyn

THE Sadler's Wells Ballet opened its fourth New York season the night of September 11th at the Metropolitan Opera House. The enchanting full-length *Sleeping Beauty* is something to boast about. Aurora is, beyond question, Fonteyn's greatest role and she danced it with all the artistry we have seen in the past plus a new warmth which seems to radiate from her very being as never before. It is very difficult to say that Fonteyn's Aurora has grown, for to begin with hers was a magical performance, but there is something new . . . and it is wonderful. Perhaps, the most unique part of Fonteyn's art is her capacity to project her steadfast belief in the fairy-tale she is dancing. From the sunlight of her first entrance to the moonlight of her vision scene all the subtle shadings and moods have been successfully defined and passed on to us. Now with the passing of seasons it becomes increasingly apparent the importance of a musical dancer.

Of the opening night's performance, it is necessary to say that Michael Some makes a gracious and handsome prince. After so long an absence, it is indeed a pleasure to have Beryl Grey return to her role as the Lilac Fairy. She makes of this role a radiant symbol of hope as well as a lyrical being. It is an important part seldom given its proper majesty and warmth. Grey has a wealth of both.

In the *Bluebird and Princess Florine*, Brian Shaw makes a dazzling Bluebird. Rowena Jackson as Princess Florine is a dancer of fine technical ability, but she lacks almost totally that important fairy-tale quality.

Elvin

The next performance of the season was once again *Sleeping Beauty*, with Violetta Elvin as Aurora and her Prince Charming, John Hart. Miss Elvin's Aurora has greatly improved. There is in her performance, now, an assurance previously lacking . . . a stronger, cleaner line. She appears to be more relaxed as well. The difficult solo variation and the *rose adagio* of Act I were well performed. This season finds Miss Elvin dancing with less of a staccato quality and that is all to the good. There is much more flow to her dancing. Elvin's approach to *Sleeping Beauty*, musically, is a definite legato one in contrast to say, Fonteyn's. Her interpreta-

tion and performance appear to be growing stronger with each season. John Hart presents a gracious Prince and an able partner. In the role of the Lilac Fairy, Svetlana Beriosova exhibits a lovely, lyrical line and a strong musicality, as well as a commanding stage presence.

Beriosova

On September 17th, Svetlana Beriosova made her first American appearance in the role of Aurora in *The Sleeping Beauty*. Youngest of the Sadler's Wells ballerinas, Beriosova is a notable addition to the ranks. She is a ballerina in the true tradition. (Happily, Beriosova is a dancer of great musical awareness, for the role of Aurora requires musicianship of the first order. Furthermore, the young lady is a born dancer with innate beauty of movement. She is lyrical, yet when the occasion requires, as in the *rose adagio* or the third act *pas de deux*, she possesses flash and brilliancy. There are at present flaws in her performance, but more experience in the title role and a few more birthdays should clear those up completely. Artistically, the girl is developing at a very rapid pace. Technically, too, she is stronger and should be able to do away with the remaining minor weaknesses in her feet before very long. Hers is a performance of charm and command, indeed, a very exciting one.

John Field, in the role of Prince Florimund gives his ballerina the finest support, and dances the third act variation allotted to him better than we have seen it danced all season. Field seems to establish a basic rapport with Beriosova which makes the vision scene as well as their work in Act III a particular delight to watch.

A Tricky Tale

The performance of *Rinaldo and Armida* that I caught occurred two days after its New York premiere. This performance enabled me to see *Coppelia* as well. In *Rinaldo and Armida*, Ashton tries to tell a tricky tale that doesn't quite come off. The story to be credible must convey a strong emotional change of pace. The main flaw appears to be in the music, itself. Malcolm Arnold's music is arid and repetitious with literally no change of emotional tenor. Armida's newly found love or tenderness, which leads to her death, must take its source from the music as well as the choreography. When this is

missing then the whole tenuous story collapses. Sometimes and Beriosova perform well as Rinaldo and Armida and able support is lent by Anne Heaton in the role of Sibilla and Ronald Hynd as Gandolfo. Particularly effective are the scenery and costumes of Peter Rice. Nothing is done with Beriosova's lyricism. If it were, it might help sustain the ending somewhat. Certainly she is made to appear much too hard and brittle to convey the idea of love.

A JOY

Coppelia, performed the same evening, was far more rewarding. Maryon Lane in the role of Swanilda, gives a fine performance. Hers is an excellent characterisation of a pert peasant girl, young and saucy. Lane gives the role just the right amount of earthiness and humour it requires. She possesses a strong technique, although there are still some spots lacking brilliance, and what is more she gives the impression that she enjoys dancing. Brian Shaw in the role of Franz is more than equal to its technical demands; however, his characterization needs more humour. I'm sure this will come with more performances. Then we shall see a really fine Franz. In the Wells' production of *Coppelia* the role of Coppélius is evidently played mostly for laughs. He is presented as a somewhat addle-pated old man with none of the sinister qualities we hear have been used to seeing. If such be the case, then Leslie Edwards' humorous portrayal of Dr. Coppélius is valid. Anya Linden does a lovely job of the Aurora variation in Act III, displaying a fine, pure line. Minor criticisms notwithstanding, the Wells' production of *Coppelia* is a real joy.



of tendencies toward both policies produces, after the manner of Stravinsky's aesthetics, "attempts at recapturing the past in terms of the present" (*Scotch Symphony*, *Roma*, *Swan Lake*); self-conscious comedy which is relieved but not disguised by moments of excellent choreography (*Bourrée Fantasque*, *Western Symphony*, *Pied Piper*, *Fanfare*); and occasional bonbons (*Con Amore*, *Pas de Trois*). If in performance such works do not seem quite as provincial, pretentious, sentimental or slight as ballets at the smaller European opera houses during the 30's and 40's, it is only because of dazzling female performers. An *Opus 34* or an *Ivesiana* instead of a contemporary recreation (a difficult achievement for which only Harald Lander seems to have the genius) would at least have brought the avant-garde public to performances. *Scotch Symphony* and *Roma* certainly did not bring the admirers of *La Sylphide* and *Napoli*.

George Jackson

Svetlana Beriosova

One of the portraits from Serge Lido's new book *Ballet No. 5*.

Hope Sheridan's report on the Sadler's Wells Ballet Season in New York will be continued in our next issue.

CHICAGO



Autumn Season



A vocal section of the dance public emphatically asserts that New York City Ballet is the best ballet there is, and yet houses were poor during the season at the Civic Opera House, Chicago, during September. This might be due to three factors, the taste of the Chicago audiences the season of the year, or the artistic merits of the troupe. If I were asked what is best in ballet, or in any field, the only answer I could give would be a shudder, but after thinking it over I should not be able to resist weighing the merits, analysing—which is just a way of re-living pleasures by reaching for their source.

The excellences of NYC Ballet are apparent—those ballets by Balanchine which are primarily visualizations of music as form, motion and emotion (although Balanchine has difficulty in realizing the emotional consequences of movement)—and those ballets by Jerome Robbins which present myths as movement. It is said of the female dancers that the least member of the corps de ballet could be a soloist in other companies; to my knowledge this has not occurred, but the reverse has—several of this corps were prominent soloists elsewhere.

Some of NYC Ballet's lacks

are obvious—an adequate male contingent. Other lacks are hidden—good decor. Ingenious lighting disguises the little and poor decor, creating the illusion of conscious elegance, neoclassicism.

Neither an excellence nor a lack, but an unsatisfactory compromise is the artistic policy which guides and animates NYC Ballet. The troupe lacks the rich variety and temperament of a true repertory company (such as Sadler's Wells or Royal Danish Ballet) and yet the directors seem to fear being consistently creative (as is Dance Theatre—Berlin). A confusion

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FRANCE

News from



THE Marquis de Cuevas Grand Ballet began its Parisian season on 7th October at the Theatre des Champs Elysées. It was a very elegant evening but on this occasion there weren't any Empire Grenadiers at the door, nor any other of the charming fantasies which Parisians have come to expect from the Marquis.

There were no new creations on the programme—only well-known pieces like *Constantia*, a ballet by William Dollar on the Concerto in F Minor by Chopin.

For a variety of reasons, this new interpretation by Jacqueline Moreau, Genia Melikova and Vladimir Skouratoff, however impeccable it may be does not drive from our memory the performance by Rosella Hightower, Marjorie Talchief and Georges Skibine.

The presence of Alicia Markova who is giving a few performances with the Marquis' Company did not manage, of itself, to lend interest to things like *La Sylphide* which we have seen before.

Of course there is Serge Golovine, who dances and acts admirably, and Alicia Markova's

style remains unique. But Paris was hoping for something else, and *Serenade* a long Spanish classic by Anna Ricarda, on music by Joachim Mallats, with superb crinoline costumes, did not seem to arouse any particular interest among the spectators of this great première which inaugurates a season of more than two months.

In Georges Skibine's charming ballet *Idylle*, Georges Zorich in the role of a circus horse had a personal success which was well deserved for the character he gave to the part.

The corps de ballet, taken in hand by John Taras, was in good form, and has recently had an injection of new blood. But the progress of the Grand Ballet is handicapped for lack of creations of a consistent artistic character.

After a somewhat unhappy opening performance, the Marquis de Cuevas' Ballet has recovered its usual enthusiastic public, which greeted with interest and pleasure the presentation of *Achilles*, a ballet which had its first performance at Cannes on 12th March this year, but was till now unknown to

Parisian audiences.

The Marquis himself is the author of the ballet, the music is by François de la Rochefoucauld, and the choreography by Georges Skibine. The action takes place in three different settings by Roger Pellerin, and the costumes are designed by the young painter Abdel Kader Farrah.

The plot is inspired by the legend of the life of the hero of the Trojan War, and the episode dealt with is that of the Isle of Scyros, where Thetis had sent his son Achilles, to guard him against the dangers which threatened his future as a warrior.

At King Lycomedes' palace in Scyros, his daughter Dedama and niece Mysandra live in tender friendship, which is upset by the arrival of Achilles (disguised as a woman, to escape his military duties). They try to resolve the mystery. Dedama seduces Achilles who strangles her in an access of rage—then tears off his tunic and wig, and betrays his secret. He is recognised and has to set off for the wars.

In the third tableau, Achilles boards the boat which sets sail for the enemy coast of Troy; sailors and warriors acclaim him and the heroes, after the final dance, take their stand in the prow. The ballet ends on this note of destiny.

A great subject clearly—and Georges Skibine has given it a choreography on clear and noble lines. The work unfolds logically if without great originality, in its successive movements. It is primarily a male ballet, and abounds in warlike steps executed with martial vigour.

The music occasionally lacks strength for such a subject, but it follows and serves the dancing, and that is not a small merit. The settings and costumes are adequate—no more than that.

Vladimir Skouratoff gave a distinguished interpretation of the difficult role of Achilles; in his woman's disguise he is deliberate, full of tact and mystery.

Denise Bourgeois, who is making great progress, was a lovely Dedama, with great understanding of her role and Yvonne Mayer draws a supple, intelligent picture of her friend Mysandra.

The outstanding players in the ensembles were the young sailors Wolfgang Brunner, Yvan Dragadzé and Daniel Sellier—all three full of youthful virility in their difficult and violent variations. In this ballet, as a whole, the Marquis' male troupe, overflowing with vigour and entrain, proved equal to its task.

SERGE Peretti, a former star dancer of the Théâtre National de l'Opéra, has returned to it as a Professor to take the place of Mlle. Zambelli who is retiring.

Harald Lander will, for the same reason, replace Albert Aveline as Ballet Master and chief dance producer.

The premières danseuses Paulette Dynalix and Geneviève Guillot are leaving the stage and will be given teaching posts in the corps de ballet.

* * *

Leonide Massine, on his recent trip to Paris, gave a lecture on Ballet in America at a reception held for him at the Choreographic Institute of the Théâtre National de l'Opéra. On the 12th October he gave another lecture on *American Music in the Modern ballet* at the Little Theatre of the United States Embassy. Next day he left for Uruguay where he is to direct ballet in the Opera Theatre at Montevideo.

He is also to compose for the American Ballet Theatre, a new choreography for Menotti's ballet *Sebastian* which the Marquis de Cuevas' Company gave (with choreography by Caton) in Paris in 1947.

* * *

Serge Lido's new album (No. 5) of Ballet was brought out on 14th October at Mme. Gilberte Courmand's Dance Library in the Place Dauphine, Paris. The crowded audience included all the ballet stars of Paris and a number of other personalities. The book is reviewed by Pigeon Crowle on another page.

* * *

Violette Verdy is to perform at La Scala, Milan in Prokofiev's *Cendrillon* with choreography by Alfredo Rodriguez who, this summer, produced the same composer's *Romeo and Juliet* in Verona, with Violette Verdy, Giulio Perugini and the whole corps de ballet of La Scala.

* * *

There is much talk in Paris about the Roland Petit ballets, which will be resumed in December at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées with *The Wolf*, *Mourning in 24 hours* and *Balance à Trois*, a ballet by Jean Babilée, who will be the male star of the Company.

Ferdinand Reyna

Top left
Vladimir Skouratoff in Achilles

BALLET MASTER YURI GRIGOROVICH

by P. M. Karp

IN 1953, the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theatre of Leningrad asked Yuri Grigorovich to direct the dances in Rimsky-Korsakov's opera *Sadko*,—the dances produced by Michael Fokine in his day.

That was Grigorovich's debut as a ballet master on the professional stage, although his name was already well-known to ballet-lovers; not only because he had been dancing for seven years at the Kirov Theatre, but mainly because he undertook production of a big ballet in three acts before he was twenty years old. That made him the youngest ballet master in the country.

There is nothing out of the ordinary in the life story of Grigorovich. His parents were employed as office workers and were not connected with the ballet.

Grigorovich was in the fifth form at the choreographic school (he was fourteen years old at the time) when the war broke out, and the school with its staff and students was, by government decision evacuated to the city of Molotov.

The best possible conditions were created for the students in their new place. In 1944, the school returned to Leningrad, and in 1946 Yuri Grigorovich graduated and was admitted to the Kirov Theatre.

Although short of stature, Grigorovich is well built. That and his graceful leap advanced him rapidly to the ranks of the soloists. For several years he danced leading parts in the *Fountain of the Bakhchisarai* (Nurali), *The Bronze Horseman* (the jester), *The Bayadere* (the idol), *The Red Poppy* (the acrobat) and *Romeo and Juliet* (the jester). He has most recently prepared the role of Shurale in the ballet of the same name.

And yet it was not his success as a dancer, which, incidentally, had come quite easily to him, that occupied Grigorovich's attention most of all. Practically at the same time he began to try his abilities as a ballet master.

Rossi Street, where the choreographic school of Leningrad is situated, is known probably to everyone who appreciates the art of the dance. Equally wide renown has been gained in the last few years by the Gorki Palace of Culture in the Narva



A scene from the ballet *Sadko*

District. Twenty years ago the Palace formed a children's group to which, after school, the children came to learn dancing. A great deal could be told about the time and attention devoted to this undertaking by many prominent representatives of choreography.

In this article however, we shall confine ourselves to Yuri Grigorovich who began to work with this group when the career of a ballet master was just a cherished dream to him. To pass the difficult test he had to prepare a new production of the *Baby Stork*, a ballet in three acts by D. Klebanov.

How he passed that test may be judged by the fact that this ballet has been on the stage of the Gorky Palace of Culture ever since. Some of the dancers who took part in the maiden production have left for the professional stage, but the *Baby Stork* is still just as popular among the children of Leningrad. Immediately afterwards Grigorovich began his work on the production of *Seven Brothers* (the music was composed by Varlamov for the ballet *Tom Thumb*).

It has also been on the stage since then. After that, Grigorovich undertook to direct an amateur choreographic group of adults. There are several such groups in the city and their performances are often up to professional level. The group of the Gorky Palace is one of the best. Grigorovich's original productions of Glinka's *Waltz Fantasia* and Dvorak's suite (from the Slav dances) attracted

attention again to his talent as a ballet master. At this time he received the offer to direct the dances for the new production of the opera *Sadko*.

The most important part is the sixth scene, under the water. It is one of the superb examples of Rimsky-Korsakov's symphonic music. It is precisely there that Rimsky-Korsakov's talent as a "painter in music" stands out in bold relief. Merely by listening to the music we can feel the sea, and furthermore, we can feel that the action takes place right in its depths. The listener is simply dominated by this feeling of the sea and he has no doubt that the action takes place in Neptune's kingdom. The entire scene—the song of *Sadko*, the procession of wondrous sea creatures and the dances—constitute an integral symphony. Thanks to this unity the scene produces an uncommonly powerful impression.

The young ballet master succeeded in producing the dances so as to make them an organic part of the scene conceived by the composer. Grigorovich's dances in Neptune's kingdom stand out as part of the elements and they are designed primarily to characterise the sea. To achieve that he uses the classical dance, as well as elements of the character dance, and to a very large degree, plastic elements. The movements of the corps de ballet seem as if they are flowing, especially in the dance of the streams.

At first there is the character-

isation of a calm sea. True to tradition the ballet master singles out the two dances: the dance of the streams and the dance of the goldfish. But when *Sadko* begins to play, the sea begins to rage and the dance conveys an expressive picture of the raging elements. It is generally recognised that the ballet master has succeeded in achieving the most important object making the fantastic "painting" of the composer visible to the audience.

Following this production Grigorovich has transferred his work as ballet master to the professional stage. While continuing his work with the choreographic group of the Palace of Culture, where he is now preparing the production of *Mirandolina* (based on Goldoni) with music by Vasilenko, Grigorovich has directed the dances in *Rigoletto*, and he is now working, together with K. Sergeyev (another ballet master of the theatre) on the production of Sergei Prokofiev's *The Stone Flower*.

After his summer tour of the Urals Grigorovich returned to Leningrad with a rich store of impressions, with knowledge of the dances and customs of that region. He is eagerly looking forward to the day when he will be able to give embodiment to all that on the stage.

He has other ideas for the future, among them his cherished dream of producing a ballet with the British people's hero, Robin Hood, as its theme.

ITALY

News from

WHILST in Venice this year Serge Lifar visited the school of Signora Alessandri. So pleased was he with the progress the school is making, he announced that he would request that in future an additional title be conferred in memory of Diaghilev, thereby placing the school under the spiritual patronage of the illustrious deceased. I had the great pleasure of toasting to the success of the school under its new title.

The next day, the eight pupils danced for Serge Lifar. Signora Alessandri presided and directed the class—first at the barre and then in the centre. Afterwards, Alessandra Vianello performed two solos. Serge Lifar paid particular attention to épaulement and position of the arm in the arabesque, correcting and instructing several pupils separately. In one or two cases he stressed the need of developing the instep. Afterwards, when the class was dismissed, he declared that already a small corps de ballet had been created, capable of performing in public.

He paid a most moving tribute to Signora Alessandri and her pupils, praising their manifest devotion to their art, whilst at the same time deploring the fact that owing to the indifference of the general public in Italy to



Serge Lifar presents one of his ballet shoes to Signora Alessandri at the Venice School of Classical Dancing. Alessandra Vianello is in the centre of the group.

Ballet, there was little or no opportunity for dancers to display their art and to find encouragement to continue. But he

promised to use his influence in an effort to persuade the Venetian authorities to allow more than one public performance each

year, and possibly in the new open-air theatre on the island of San Giorgio.

Robert Paterson.

CANADA

STAGING a full scale comeback after the fire that destroyed all its assets in 1954, The Royal Winnipeg Ballet opened a new season on November 16th in Winnipeg with a Gala Performance attended by Provincial and Civic dignitaries, and carried on for two additional evening performances, then entrusted its company of 20 dancers for a month-long tour of the West, including performances in Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle.

Chief among its assets in the current season are a colourful new ballet *Caribe*, specially choreographed for them by ex-R.W.B. dancer Paddy Stone, now dancing on Broadway in the Joyce Grenfell show, and *Pas de Quatre* by Anton Dolin. Mr. Dolin is flying to Winnipeg especially to teach his work to the Company.

Heading a Company of twenty dancers drawn from all over

Canada, the United States, Mexico and England, are two of the R.W.B.'s established stars of former years, Carlu Carter and Bill McGrath. Miss Carter and Mr. McGrath, who have danced with the Company on both Canadian and American tours, returned to the Company in September after a season with Vancouver's Theatre Under the Stars, arriving in Winnipeg just five days after their marriage.

New Ballet Master for the Company is Yugoslav born Nenad Lhotka, a dancer of great European repute and winner of two State awards for his dancing in Yugoslavia. Also with the R.W.B. is his wife, Jill Alis, English born dancer. From far afield comes Gloria Contreras of Mexico City, a young ballerina of great promise.

A special feature of the performances in Winnipeg will be the guest appearances of Jean McKenzie and Arnold Spohr.

Miss McKenzie, former leading dancer of the Company, retired to private life three years ago, but is making a return appearance in Gweneth Lloyd's ballet *Parable*, formerly known as the *Wise Virgins*, now re-choreographed for the new season, with new costumes and settings. She will be partnered, as in former years, by Arnold Spohr, long a leading light of the ballet but now devoting his time to teaching and television work.

Another "first" for the new season will be the presentation of a ballet new to Canadian audiences, a Yugoslav favourite entitled *Devil in the Village*, to music by Fran Lhotka, eminent composer and father of the R.W.B.'s ballet Master.

Heading this re-born Company is Betty Farrally, formerly Ballet Mistress and now Artistic Director.

* * * *

HEINO Heiden's new ballet *Spanish Ballad* appeared on Television during October. Produced by Frank Coleman and with leading dancers Lillian Lanese and Jury Gotshalks this half-hour was very successful. Music for the ballet was by Granados, and Spanish guitarist Miguel Garcia played between the scenes of the ballet.

Heino Heiden will do two more TV shows, musical numbers, and is then off to Europe to do the choreography for *Fanny*; the Broadway musical will have its European première at Munich State Opera on December 9th, and will be directed by Willy Duvoisin. This will be the first American Musical to be produced in Germany.

Whilst in Germany Heino Heiden will choreograph a new ballet for German TV, probably *Sebastian* by Menotti, and this ballet will be presented for Montreal TV in January 1956.

WITH the popularity of ballet very much in everybody's thoughts, I think it is time that some sort of statement was made on the present situation in Australia, where it has been enjoying an unprecedented boom.

The Borovansky Ballet, the main professional company, is most certainly up to European standards and, in my estimation, far superior to our own Festival Ballet. It is largely principalised by ex-Ballet Russe artists and it would be almost possible to revive certain ballets with their original casts. This year Yurek Shabelevsky and David Lichine joined the company. Although John Cranko recreated *Pineapple Poll* for the company, its repertoire is almost exclusively taken from the Ballet Russe, and there is not a work in its large repertoire by a local choreographer. This year there have been new productions of *Francesca da Rimini* by Lichine himself, who has also made some changes to his own *Graduation Ball*. Last year Vassilkovsky recreated *Symphonie Fantastique* and it was so successful that Shabelevsky was commissioned to revive *Les Présages*. At the moment Lichine is working on a new semi-Spanish ballet, *Corrida*, a sequel to *Graduation Ball* entitled *Girls' Dormitory*, a full-length version of *Casse Noisette*, and next year it is probable that a full-length *Swan Lake* will be staged. Two new principals from America, Jocelyn Vollmar and Royes Fernandez, joined the company, but three of the better soloists, Paul Hammond, Christiane Hubert and Joan Osborne, left earlier in the year. Peggy Sager, Vassili Trunoff, Kathleen Gorham and Paul Grinwis, all remembered by ballet lovers in England, head the company. In spite of this company's success, it must be regretted that because of the high standard of the principals and the large number of imported artists, the more talented younger Australian dancers get insufficient opportunities to progress much beyond corps level, and eventually leave to try their luck elsewhere.

However, Audrey Nicholls, who came to London and proved herself to be such a valuable asset to the Ballet Rambert, returned to her old company this year, this time engaged as a soloist.



The Walter Gore Ballet, led by Gore, Paula Hinton and Cecil Bates, did not fare well. This was mainly due to the fact that Gore was responsible for all the choreography, and a certain monotony of programme resulted. The corps was of such a poor standard that he was forced to reduce the content of actual dancing to a minimum. The company has since disbanded. The enterprising Ballet Guild, directed by Laurel Martyn, is now on an Arts Council sponsored tour of provincial centres. Its repertoire comprises reproductions of standard classics, tastefully re-arranged to suit its modest numbers, and new work by local choreographers. It is the only group which gives the Australian choreographer the facilities for staging his work. Algeranoff, assisted by Claudie Algeranova and Ronald Reay, are still performing their valuable service to ballet by presenting lecture demonstrations incorporating excerpts from the great ballets.

John O'Brien

At the moment the Borovansky Ballet Company is in Perth, Western Australia, where it is enjoying another successful Season, presenting amongst others, the new Ballet *The Three Devils*—By Paul Grinwis, a scene from which is shown above.

Suggestions for Xmas Gifts

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EACH of the postwar years has been marked—until now—by at least one event of outstanding quality; the visit of a really significant company showing ballets of some importance or novelty, the appearance of a freshly brilliant dancer, the creation of a major work by an important choreographer, the emergence of a new designer, composer or scenarist of obvious originality. 1955 must be reckoned the least fruitful of the postwar decade; its signature is one of a steady level of competence interrupted by disappointing failures. No top-class talent has emerged, though some genuinely gifted young artists—already known and generously welcomed by critics and audiences alike—have maintained a steady rate of progress. This was the year in which London did not see a new ballet—let alone a major work—by either of the three greatest Western choreographers (let's leave the Russians out of this: we haven't seen enough of their work to judge either their choreography or their dancing accurately). Following Massine, Balanchine and Tudor the name of Ashton has, in my estimation over many years, been the next of importance. Certainly his name has been in the news with the achievement of four new ballets within the year's first six months, though I found his January creations at Covent Garden and his later *Mme. Chrysanthe* less satisfying than I had hoped. His Copenhagen production of *Romeo and Juliet* was brought to the Edinburgh Festival and was there seen by many Ashtonian fans who journeyed festival-wards for a holiday. It is a distinguished work but not distinguished enough from a man of his talent and former achievement.

Altogether the new ballets seem to be a smaller crop than in recent years and the six leading names in British choreography—each partly or wholly a manifestation of the Ballet Rambert of the 1930's (Ashton, de Valois, Tudor, Howard, Staff, Gore)—are during this present year reduced to one, that of Ashton. A succeeding generation of younger talents, tried out over recent years in the Sadler's Wells Companies, Ballet Rambert Ballet Workshop or other venture, has dominated the scene during the past twelve months. These include John Cranko, Kenneth MacMillan, Alfred Rodrigues, Peter Darrell and Michael Holmes.

The largest contributions of

the year were made by Ashton with four ballets and Kenneth MacMillan, three. Cranko offered two very slight pieces with London Ballet Circle's experimental season in the autumn, and had made a reconstruction of *The Lady and The Fool* at Covent Garden, this being preceded by his operadances last January in Tippet's *Midsummer Marriage*. Darrell gave two lightweight works in the year, one at Ballet Workshop and one in the L.B.C. season mentioned above, which also saw staged Rupert Doone's *The Circle*. Robert Joffrey, an American visitor working with Ballet Rambert, gave *Persephone* and *Pas des Déeses*; and there were single efforts from Harald Lander, Zachary Solov, Michael Holmes, Alfred Rodrigues, Elizabeth West and Wendy Hilton (these latter four being shown, so far, only outside London). This is the extent of new stage choreography—as distinct from jobs in musicals, films and TV.—by all the talents working professionally this year.

Useless to analyse again each of these works; mostly they have been estimated by varying kinds of critics several times over; those artists showing a single

new work after a long absence from choreography did not reveal anything startlingly new either in idea or style. Joffrey's is a mixed talent, possibly capable of something striking when he ceases to copy (unconsciously) all the steps he admires in classroom work and in other peoples' ballets. MacMillan is at the moment the most exciting possibility of all, his *Dances Concertantes*, *House of Birds* and *Laidrette* are each marked by an inventive power which is still lacking in discipline; he can make new steps that really look different from ones we know and that are pleasingly "right", either dramatically or aesthetically. He lacks a firm notion of the *shape* of a ballet (a defect he shares with all but the very greatest masters) and his stories tend to lose some dramatic point because he over-develops certain sections of his ballets. A good ballet, after all, needs as much control in shaping its incidents or phases as an original musical composition. Incidentally, it is this tendency to "lose" the actual ballet in a maze of steps and movements (*i.e.*, looking so closely at the trees that you can't see the wood) that marks most young choreographers today—a tendency which clearly gives

the lie to the lazy-minded notion that "You cannot teach choreography"; Choreography can be taught as precisely as musical composition—and, of course, demands as much original talent to put what is taught to good use.

John Cranko and Peter Darrell are experienced enough to be able to produce something fresh (even if only on a small scale) each time they essay a new ballet; at present Darrell has the courage to tackle fairly difficult themes but either his invention is resting or he has been working recently with too many dancers who cannot measure up to the subtleties of both dancing and characterisation that his new works seem to require. Cranko's works this year have been, in my opinion, almost wholly disappointing; he has been content in large sections of each of them to imitate his former self, or the more "chi-chi" aspects of other peoples' works; when he tries—as I believe he has done—to satirise either the world of Ballet or the world of real affairs, he fails because, perhaps only temporarily, his imaginings and his invention are worn thin.

One new designer and no new dance composer emerged among

The Chinese Classical Theatre in The Monkey King entering Heaven

Photo: Pic



BALLET YEAR

all these efforts; the designs of Isabel Lambert, Peter Rice, Peter Snow, were suitable to the themes involved, and the newcomer Nicolas Georgiadis, who decorated MacMillan's *Dances Concertantes* and *House of Birds*, showed some sensitivity and delicacy unhindered by any originality. Scores by such old hands as Malcolm Arnold, Benjamin Britten and Alan Rawsthorne were good, musicianly jobs but in each case lacking that comprehensive sympathy with the *total design* of the ballets which illuminates the best dance scores.

No foreign ballet company appeared here but a wide diversity of dance groups performed in rigidly national idioms (*i.e.*, basically forms of folk-dance adapted with more or less cunning for the stage); these included Spanish, Bulgarian, Japanese, Chinese. An oddity was the Yugoslav Opera and Ballet, whose ballets, though danced with energy and conviction, were poor in choreography which, throughout almost every phrase, was a badly remembered paraphrase of Fokine or some second-rate admirer of Fokine. The Russian Folk Dance Company, led by Igor Moiseyev, gave a wide-

-ranging programme of spectacular dance arrangements, all based on traditional folk forms from many provinces of Russia—but in no sense did it compare with those adaptations and stylisations of folk-dance that are part of the foundation of true Ballet.

Most of the foregoing reads like a catalogue of despair—in the truest sense it is, for the year's achievements have been notable for the amount of imitation, repetition, playing-safe—certainly so far as the three Prime Elements of Ballet are concerned. Not one choreographer—even among that handful of sound triers—has made a whole work, even a ten-minute duet, out of totally new and simple dance patterns; the good ideas, the neat inventions, have been wrapped around with plenty of clichés of movement and situation. Similarly, the designers and composers have, almost to a man, repeated something they have previously created or made clever paraphrases on what someone else created first—probably a long time ago.

So far as the onlooker can mark and interpret policy amongst ballet organisations, it

has been a year of concentration on safe formulas (both Sadler's Wells Companies); a desperate struggle to help new ideas and new people but without much success (Ballet Rambert and Ballet Workshop); a fight to hold on to popular favour (Festival Ballet). Ballet Workshop has temporarily at least ceased activity and the only other ventures worth the label "experimental"—London Ballet Circle's programme of late September and the fledgling West Country Ballet (seen only in Edinburgh)—did not bring to light even one small original talent, among either dancers, choreographers or designers. Two remarkable amateur ventures during the year were the Bournemouth Ballet Society's production of a commendable, and skilfully arranged, full-length ballet to Tchaikovsky music last Spring; and a full programme of professionally-styled ballets used as launching platform for nicely budding young dance talents of the Mari Bicknell School in Cambridge.

The cheering memory of the year (strictly within the London scene of activity) has been the splendid quality of most of the ballerina performances at Covent

Garden; Margot Fonteyn has at times surpassed even her own former excellences; Beryl Grey and Violetta Elvin have imposed the only possible additional touches on some of their great roles. Svetlana Beriosova firmly consolidates her high talent as a lyrical—and to a lesser degree—dramatic ballerina; almost unheralded, Anya Linden sprang, if not exactly into the headlines certainly into the topmost level of audience regard, with her performance of *Coppelia* last Spring, and continued to blossom more and more fully in both ballerina and soloist roles during the remainder of the long summer season at Covent Garden.

Danilova was resplendent throughout her guest season with Festival Ballet, showing that first-rate Russian training and background puts something into a dancer that never really fades. Noreen Sopwith, Rambert's leading female dancer at present, is a worthy successor to the many beautiful ballerinas of special category that the Ballet Rambert has fostered and presented. Although no noteworthy new male dancer appeared anywhere, some performances by Festival and Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballets gave cause to think that British male dancing is not in such a bad way as it has seemed in some recent years Perhaps something will happen with a bang next year: we obviously have a sufficiency of talent of various kinds—what that talent needs is brilliant ideas thrust towards it by ruthless artistic direction; and 1955 (let's call it a lean, not an empty, year) has singularly lacked the dynamic impact of both excellent ideas for ballets, and excellent guidance in the working-out of balletic ideas. We can only hope that this year's tired atmosphere has been due to a species of temporary exhaustion, and not to that feeling of untouchable superiority that can occur when managements feel that they have a willing public feeding out of their hands.

A. V. Coton

The Moiseyev Company from Moscow, in Yourotchka



The Mari Bicknell School was the subject of a special article written by A. V. Coton in our October issue.



DANCE WITH

L EON Grieg, former soloist with the Grand Ballet de Marquis de Cuevas has recently completed the choreography for the first large scale musical and dance film ever to be made in Cairo. This film, provisionally titled *Premier Amour* will probably be shown at the Cannes Film Festival next year. It stars Samia Gamal, the most celebrated film actress and dancer in the Orient and uses a corps of 24 girls and eight boys.

Leon encountered considerable difficulties in making this film as there is no fundamental basis for dancing in Egypt—everything is improvised by the performer. This was the first time a choreographer had been employed on a film and a whole new technique had to be evolved as the music changes rhythm every few bars, and these may be as long as eighty counts each. This problem was solved by having a large drum beating eights continuously irrespective of the rest of the orchestra. A steady beat was essential for the final big production number in which the girls are divided into groups representing Ancient, Lower and Upper Egypt and Oriental. Each dance in turn shows the development of the different styles until finally all are together, still continuing their own movements, with Samia Gamal appearing as a modern culmination of them all combined

with classical ballet. Leon directed this sequence and also designed the decor and costumes for all the dance scenes.

Before commencing work on this film Leon Grieg made extensive research into the dance in Egypt. The following article sets out some of the facts he discovered during his search.

By **LEON GRIEG**

A PPROXIMATELY 3,500 B.C. when King Menes became the first ruler to unite Upper and Lower Egypt under one crown, the country was divided into forty-two districts; twenty-two in Upper Egypt and the rest in Lower Egypt. Each of these districts, or Nomes as they are usually called after their Greek name, retained a certain amount of independence, particularly in religion. They all possessed their own local deity, and these deities were the main influence in the lives and culture of the people living in the area that they dominated. Although fashions changed and certain deities were later accepted as national Gods the people always remained faithful to their original ideals, though worshipping them on a lesser scale.

Each Nome would have its religious ceremonies and festivals,

and these were accompanied by music, singing and dancing. There is evidence also that a large proportion of the proceedings took place in the form of a mimed play.

The *heb-sed*, for example, in which the pharaoh himself was the principal player, was a ritual in which the Gods supposedly perpetuated the kings' youth. The numerous accounts and various illustrations found by archaeologists support the idea that these festivals contained a great deal of dance movement. Very often, there would be a hundred or more participants, and as painted records show no sign of confusion it is easy to ascertain that there must have been some fixed choreography, or regimentation. The innumerable paintings of dancers found on the walls of the ancient tombs support this theory, for they show a remarkable co-ordination of movement, which cannot be purely coincidental with the artists' ideals. They help strengthen the belief that the dancers portrayed had a set choreographic pattern to perform, but also the feats that the illustrations show them executing could only have been performed by trained dancers, and strong acrobats, with a well perfected technique. Were these dances completely lost with the fall of the ancient Egyptian civilisation? It was the ardent desire to try to answer

this question that encouraged my stay in Egypt.

From Aswan, the southern extremity of Egypt to Alexandria in the north, one still can recognise forty-two districts. Not that they bear any real resemblance to those of five thousand years ago, but there are forty-two, and they each have their own local costume, and homely customs. South of Cairo, which is only twenty-five kilometres north of the old dividing capital of Memphis, the land is a narrow fertile strip; like a green ribbon lying over the desert which banks it on either side. North of Cairo this ribbon spreads out to form the fan shaped delta. The Nile divides, and its tributaries make up the lakes and marshes that make the delta a wild and flat and lonely place.

Go to any village on a Fete day and you will find music and dancing. Travel on to the next village and you will witness the same spectacle. Then drive for twenty miles, and you will already find an entirely different atmosphere.

The rhythm of the drums has changed, and the experienced eye can notice slight variations in the steps of the dance. Jump from Upper Egypt to the delta and the change is formidable. These two regions produce the two vastly different styles that, with the Dance Orientale, form the trio that represents Egyptian folklore to-



Opposite Page

Dancers and musicians, from an unknown tomb, at Thebes, XIXth Dynasty, or 1,300 B.C.

This Page Top

Scene of Dancers accompanied by an orchestra, from the tomb of Nen-fer-ti-kai. Sakkara. IVth or Vth Dynasty. or Approx. 3,000 B.C.

This Page Bottom

Samia Gamal, wearing a Saidienne costume made of solid gold worked on silk, worth four thousand pounds.

THE PHAROAHS

day.

Saidienne, the dance of Upper Egypt, has a long rhythmic quality. The female dancers concentrate on a sustained shuffling movement with their feet. The music will gain rapidly, but the dancers will keep a restrained movement as if held back by the heat or oppressed by the encroaching desert that they can see on either side.

In the north *Iscandarani* is a dance with more savage movements. The dancers use every part of their bodies to emphasize the quick rhythm of the drums. They stamp their feet, but not with agitation, always as in the *Saidienne* that movement is slightly restrained which adds to its exciting quality.

Baladi or *Masri*, is the Egyptian form of the *danse du Ventre*, it blends into this essentially oriental dance the qualities of both the *Saidienne* and *Iscandarani*. The costume is modernised, and from its obvious sex-appeal this is the dance that one finds in all of the cabarets. It has no set pattern, or music, and both dancers and musicians continue ad lib, until they are exhausted. Sometimes the dancer will accompany herself with *El Saggat*. These tiny cymbals worn on the fingers, are beaten together similarly to castanettes. Many believe they were introduced with the Arab conquest in 641 A.D. The Moors introduced them to

Spain and Portugal. However they resemble the style of castanettes, used by the ancient Egyptians, to be seen in many wall reliefs; particularly one representing a dance at a funeral,

at Sakkara. A line of men are walking at a regular rhythm, while about them twirl girls beating tambourines, while others accompany them with *El Saggat*. One dance remains funda-

mentally the same throughout the whole country as it has doubtless done over countless centuries. In fact the costume and movements of the dancers bear a

continued on page 27



MARGOT FONTEYN

Best Christmas wishes
to Readers of Ballet Today
Margot Fonteyn.



Photo: Mike Davis

MARGOT FONTEYN IN "GISELLE"

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ALICIA Markova

All my good wishes
for a happy
Christmas to Ballet
Today Readers.

Alicia Markova



Photo: Mike Davis

ALICIA MARKOVA AND ERIK BRUHN IN "GISELLE"
(Television Performance)

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THE ULANOVA STORY

GALINA ULANOVA did not want to be a dancer, had no irresistible desire to enter the magic world of the stage



PART ONE

WHAT is the quality that defines a ballerina? Why is she different from the soloists and corps de ballet who surround her? The names and precedence of the fabulous half a dozen dancers who can truthfully claim the title *assoluta*, must always be a matter of dispute.

To the majority of Western ballet goers, Ulanova is known only through her film appearances, but even on this scanty celluloid acquaintance there are few, who would hesitate to place her on their list of great ballerinas.

Ulanova's first glimpse of the ballet came when she was taken to the Mariinsky theatre for a performance of *The Sleeping Beauty*, by her father, a ballet producer. However, she disgraced herself by calling out loudly at the first appearance of the Lilac Fairy, "That's my Mummy" and even today at the entry of the Lilac Fairy she recalls that moment.

As a child Ulanova was not stage struck. She was just seven at the time of the revolution and grew up in a Russia where changing systems afforded little luxury for theatrical artists. Her parents were doing three shows a day, two in the theatre, plus one appearance in the cinema each

night, which was part of the drive for mass education. There was no-one at home to look after her, so Ulanova's childhood memories are of draughty back stage dressing rooms and trudging home through the snow drenched streets of St. Petersburg in the early hours of the morning.

Having learnt so early all the disadvantages of her future profession, it is not surprising that, when informed she was going to have dancing lessons, she firmly declared 'But I don't want to'. However, the decision was inflexible, principally because the ballet school was the only one which could offer boarding accommodation. In her first term Galina Ulanova was conspicuous only for persistent demands to go home, and finally her mother, who was also one of the teachers at the school agreed to take her away at the New Year.

Thus, counting the days to her removal Ulanova applied herself to her studies, confined to barre work and exercises at this stage, only to find when the fatal day dawned, she was enjoying herself far too much to want to leave.

Her stage debut came the same year, when she and her friend Tanya Vecheslova appeared with a group of first year



you'll get nowhere, you'll be nothing but a figurante, you must work."

That Ulanova heeded the warnings of this inner voice we can have no doubt. The knowledge that she had resisted the temptation to slack gave her not only a feeling of satisfaction bordering on vanity, but a firm technical peg on which she was later to hang the exquisitely shaded performances of an artist equally conversant with the other arts, particularly literature and painting.

S.R.

Opposite page top

Galina Ulanova Soviet prima ballerina, in her country home at Kellomvaki near Leningrad. The house was a gift to her from the Soviet of Working People Deputies

With her is her husband Yuri Zavadsky a well known stage producer and actor, and art director of the Moscow Mossviet Theatre

Photo by R. Mazelev

Opposite page bottom

Prokofiev's ballet Romeo and Juliet. Galina Ulanova as Juliet M. Gabovich as Romeo

Part 2

This page top

Galina Ulanova as she is today

will be in our

January issue

This page bottom

In Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake.

students in Drigo's *Caprices of a Butterfly*, at the Opera.

Once the first black bout of stage fright was over, Ulanova enjoyed her interpretation of a ladybird with all the unsophisticated joy of any child's let's-pretend game. Her first real role was one of the birds in the prologue of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snow Maiden*. These were idyllic years, when play and work merged so completely. All too soon they were over and Ulanova entered the dark phase she now refers to as 'my apprentice years.'

Her childhood confidence had snapped and she was obsessed by technique to a degree that quite obscured the pleasure she might have felt in being given the leading roles in *Les Sylphides* and her beloved *Sleeping Beauty*. This was the legacy of the Leningrad Ballet School, whose motto 'give on stage what you were taught in class' probably satisfied the average pupil, but such a maxim was not sufficient to stem the intellectual cravings of the budding ballerina.

The lack of artistic direction, combined with the everlasting tyranny of barre work, particularly in the glorious summer months when she would have preferred to have been out canoeing on her favourite Lake

Seliger, made Ulanova hate ballet as never before. This mood was to last for some five or six years.

She describes her first Odette-Odile, given at the age of eighteen, four months after her debut as a fully fledged dancer, as devoid of feeling, and she speaks of being paralysed by nerves when called upon to dance difficult passages.

However it was now too late to turn back. Having set her feet on the path of ballet, she was determined to follow only in the most illustrious footsteps.

Taking as her models, Anna Pavlova and Marie Taglioni, not forgetting the example of her own mother, Maria Romanova, Ulanova found relief in striving to reach the stage where her technique would be so integrated that she could forget it completely and concentrate on the character being portrayed.

Even now, as a prima ballerina, she has not achieved that ambition. She confesses that at every performance there is some movement the execution of which demands all her powers of concentration. She is therefore slightly sceptical of so called 'natural' dancers. Of her own training she says: "There was an odious voice inside me that kept on saying, If you don't work,







*Margot
Fonteyn*

*Michael
Somes*

**Death
of
Giselle**

*Sadler's Wells
Ballet
at
Covent Garden*

*Photographed by
Frank Sharman
F.R.P.S.*



Drawings by June Ryan

The Mascot

EVERYONE in the ballet class had a mascot except Mimi. Trudi Goldberg had an old ballet shoe that Moira Shearer had worn on the Covent Garden stage. Brenda Dickson had a pair of ancient tights that had once belonged to Markova. Marjorie Summers boasted of a Gala programme signed by no less than three great ballerinas—Margot Fonteyn, Violetta Elvin, and Veronica Weston. Sylvia Bloomfield had—oh, you could go on for ever! They all had *something*, thought Mimi wistfully as she warmed up for her Character class even if it was only the fallen petal of a flower that had dropped from Fonteyn's bouquet.

Only Mimi had nothing. She was far too shy to bombard a star for her autograph. When Fonteyn passed her on the theatre stairs on her way up to her dressing-room, Mimi flattened herself against the wall and tried to pretend she wasn't there, though all the time she was longing for just one smile from the Great One. The stupid part of it was that Fonteyn would have given the shy little dark eyed girl an autograph, or a pair of worn out point-shoes, or even a flower from her bouquet, had she but known of Mimi's longing, for, as everyone knows, Fonteyn is the kindest and most human of all the great ballerinas. But she is also very modest, and never pressed her favours upon people, unasked.

When the lists of the students who had got small parts in the ballets—rats, mice, court-ladies, pages, and the like—went up on the notice-board in the Sadler's Wells school at Colet Gardens, where Mimi was learning to dance, Mimi would sigh again, for her name was never among the lucky ones. Nor was she promoted to the Senior Class although she had been at the Wells almost longer than anyone. It didn't occur to her that her dancing was being carefully watched by the authorities, who thought too much of delicate, fragile little Mimi Carter to "force" her. Mimi, superstitious as most dancers are, put it all down to her lack of a mascot. Hadn't the ballet-mistress from the Theatre Ballet come down yesterday? and yet to-day

A Story of Sadler's Wells

A Christmas story written specially for Ballet Today

when the usual list had appeared in the Winter Garden with all her friends' names upon it, there was no Mimi Carter! "If only, if only I had a mascot!" sighed the child. "Even an old satin ribbon from the shoe of Someone Great would do!"

The term was nearing its end. There was to be an Afternoon of Ballet, staged by the whole school as a grand finale. The programme consisted of a number of items—one or two *solos* and a classical *pas-de-deux* by the senior students; a short ballet about a train, done mostly in mime, by the children from the White Lodge School, and a ballet adapted freely from Hans Anderson's *Little Matchgirl*, danced by Mimi's class. The choreography was by one of the male students—Phillip Golantz, a young Polish boy. He had presented the story quite straightforwardly, but in the middle had interposed a "ballet within a ballet"—a scene in which the toys on the Christmas tree which the poor little match seller sees through the window, come to life and dance. Mimi had been given the rôle of the Fairy from the top of the tree. It wasn't a big rôle, but Mimi loved it. She used to go home to the Y.W.C.A. hostel where she lived, draw the curtains of her tiny cubicle close, and read Hans Anderson's story over and over again. No wonder that in her dancing you could feel the sad atmosphere of the pathetic little fairy story.

Christmas was only a week or two away. The shops were full of lovely presents and gay decorations. Mimi used to stand looking at the windows—the lights and the snow scenes enchanted her. It was just like fairyland! There was no envy or jealousy in her heart; it never occurred to her that other girls had new dresses for Christmas, or received expensive presents. She was fifteen, but very young for her age. Indeed, in some ways she was more like twelve. The dancing competition, which she had won when a pupil at her North Country dancing school, had sent her to the Wells, it is true, but after her fees had been paid, together with the very reasonable sum demanded by the hostel for her board and lodging, there was nothing left over for pocket-money. To be sure, her mother sent her five shillings every week regularly, (with a letter telling her to be a good girl, and work hard, and not waste her money on comics and ice cream) but five shillings a week doesn't go very far in London—especially if it has to include bus and tube fares, and an occasional sandwich at a snack-bar.

By
Lorna Hill

As we have said, Mimi had no longing for new clothes, but she did wish she had a little money to buy Christmas presents for her Mam and Dad. If only she could get a part, however small, in one of the ballets, then she would be paid every time she appeared on stage, and although the amount was very little and most of it would go on make-up and new point-shoes, yet there would be enough left over to buy presents for her parents. Ah well—no mascot, no part! said Mimi to herself. She would just pop into Woolworths and get a couple of cheap cards. Dad would understand, even if her Mam didn't.

Mimi's father and mother lived in the far North of England on the outskirts of an industrial town. Mrs. Carter was an energetic little woman who spent most of her time scrubbing and cleaning her already spotless little council house. Mr. Carter was a thin, dreamy, little man, with sad, dark eyes like Mimi's own. He was a carpenter by day, but at nights he picked up his much loved violin and played in the cafe of a local cinema. The one passion of his life was opera. When his little daughter had been born, he had been determined to call her Mimi, after the singer in the famous opera, *La Bohème*. His wife had laughed.

"Mimi! Don't be daft, Alfred! Why, nobody's ever heard of the name."

"I have," said Mimi's father quietly, and he had stuck to the idea. It wasn't often that gentle Mr. Carter made up his mind, but when he did, as Mrs. Carter said, "a mule wasn't in it!" In his secret heart he was quite sure that his daughter would inherit his own love for the opera, and become, in due course, a great prima donna. Alas! He was doomed to disappointment. Mimi proved to be musical enough (that is to say, she had an excellent sense of time), but as for singing—she was tone deaf! If you played one note on the piano, Mimi sang another, and no amount of practising made the least difference.

Each week the students of the Sadler's Wells School could apply for free tickets, either for performances at Covent Garden, or at the smaller Sadler's Wells Theatre. In this way the authorities gave them the opportunity of seeing all the great dancers, and of watching the ballets that were in the Sadler's Wells repertoire. Some of the students didn't take advantage of the free passes, but Mimi loved to sit in the theatre and watch the finished products of all the years and years of training, such as she herself was undergoing.

One afternoon, she was lucky enough to see the birth of a star. It is the custom of the Wells to let their budding ballerinas try out their wings at a matinée performance, and this afternoon an almost unknown dancer, Ella Rosetti, was dancing for the first time a principal rôle, that of Odette-Odile in *Le Lac Des Cygnes*. Of course Mimi had heard of her—how her career had been interrupted by illness, and how she had come back from Switzerland cured, and was now dancing better than ever.

Spell-bound, Mimi sat in the back row of the stalls with her friend, Brenda, and watched the lovely story unfolding—Prince Siegfried, who must marry, and who meets, when out hunting, a lovely swan-maiden, Odette, and falls in love with her. Odette, however, is bewitched, and can only be freed from the spell if the Prince promises to marry her. He promises, but alas! a wicked magician, Von Rothbart, brings his own daughter, Odile, and she impersonates Odette. Poor Odette appears at the window, wringing her hands, but the Prince does not see her. He asks the wicked Odile to marry him, and all is tragedy. Only in death are the lovers united.

Watching the beautiful girl on the stage, Mimi knew that she was watching no ordinary dancer. Ella Rosetti danced not only with her exquisitely arched and slender feet, but with her whole body. She put mind, heart, and soul into her dancing. Her interpretation of the swan-maiden, Odette, was so tender and lyrical that members of the audience were moved to tears, and many rushed out in the intervals and bought flowers for the new ballerina which were handed up to her at the close of the performance, so that she was almost hidden in a bower of roses. Thus it was that Ella Rosetti, unheralded, and almost unknown, was acclaimed as one of the Wells' greatest dancers.

"Well? Why not ask her to be your mascot?"

Mimi jumped. She had forgotten all about Brenda. She was still in the enchanted forest with the lovely swan-maidens.

"My mascot?"

"Yes." Brenda was standing out in the aisle, impatient to be gone. In fact, the theatre was, by now, almost empty and the programme-sellers were turning up the seats and switching off the lights. "You're always saying you haven't a mascot. Well, Ella Rosetti is so new

Continued on page 30





Photo: Mike Davis

SVETLANA BERIOSOVA IN "THE SHADOW"

JULY						
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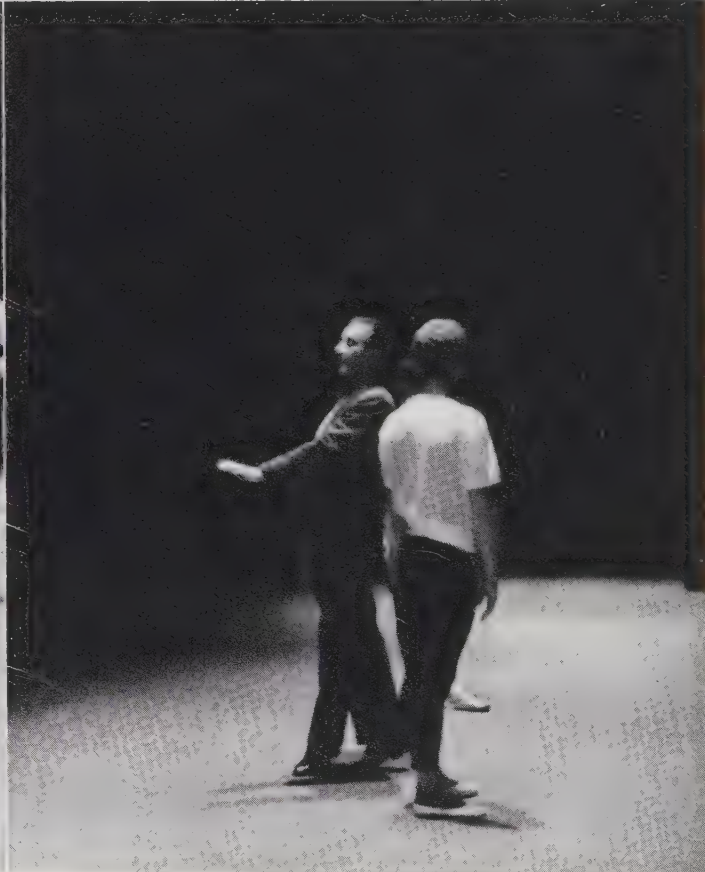
Photo: Mike Davis

VIOLETTA ELVIN IN "SWAN LAKE"

OCTOBER						
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"The younger generation owe much to Anton Dolin" says Sonia Roberts. This is a typical series of shots of Dolin instructing Belinda Wright and John Gilpin. Taken at the Festival Hall during the Company's recent London Season.

Photos: Mike Davis

THAT sincerity and modesty are valuable adjuncts to artistry, no one would deny, but today, when the quest for these qualities has a tendency to fill our ballet companies with earnest self-effacing dancers, how fortunate it is that we still have active amongst us, Anton Dolin, a man who knows how to dispense magic in the theatre. Alone in the limelight of a bare stage for *Bolero*, or gyrating at the end of the wheel of dancers in the first act of *Giselle*, he exudes stage presence, possessing an almost hypnotic power to command our attention.

The man, who describing himself at twenty, says 'I was rather a flamboyant young man, not bad looking and not unconscious of it' does not shun the epitaph of showman. As early as 1936, in a letter to the Manchester Guardian commencing 'This snobism appals me' he declared himself the arch enemy of those who seek to segregate ballet from the rest of the theatre. More recently he has said 'I cannot understand why it should be considered vulgar to dance a classical pas de deux in revue, when the same dance performed on the stage of a world famous opera house would be regarded as the perfection of balletic art'.

His eager sense of humour delights in deflating the falsely pretentious. The reporter who enquired how he cared for his famous feet, received the terse reply 'I wash them' and the student who asked in what respects Negro and classical dancing differed was told 'the only difference is the colour'.

This puckish strain is probably an inherited Irish characteristic, for despite his Spanish looks and Russian name, Anton Dolin comes from an Irish family resident in Sussex. His real name is Patrick Healey-Kay. To his

intimates he is known as Pat, although to Markova he will always be Patté. This was how Astafieva introduced him, when eleven year old Markova, first met her seventeen year old fellow pupil.

However, any reckless individual using these titles without proper permission is likely to be frozen off with Dolin's piercingly dark-eyed stare. If they combine bad dancing with their familiarity they may well call on themselves a display of real Irish wrath. These are not qualities calculated to win the affection of the ambitious small fry, yet youth has every reason to be grateful to Dolin, who has never committed the cardinal sin of surrounding himself with mediocre danseurs so that his own talents shine more brightly. Festival Ballet has one of the strongest male elements in Western Europe.

The ballet *The Blue Train*, which in 1925 made Dolin famous overnight had a strong acrobatic choreography. It is not surprising therefore that Dolin, the first British danseur of note and the only Englishman to star for Diaghilev says "Athletes could teach our male dancers much in the way of stamina and guts".

Girls wishing to gain entry to his company must have good looks as well as dancing diplomas. He regards Cecily Robinson, director of the South African National Ballet as one of the best sources of corps de ballet dancers, although many of Festival Ballet are drawn from the Cone-Ripman school where Dolin himself had his first lessons.

He recalls that his father whose recreations were fox hunting and cricket was strongly opposed to the project, but after persuasion his mother proved a staunch ally. They are still devoted to one another, and this year sprightly

86 year old Mrs. Healey-Kay appeared with her son in a Gala performance of *Petrouchka*.

He first used the name of Anton Dolin in 1923 when he appeared with Astafieva's company of Anglo-Russian dancers at the Albert Hall, in his own arrangement of Rimski-Korsakov's *Hymn to the Sun*. In the Diaghilev corps de ballet he had combined his two names and called himself Patrikief.

It was in the Diaghilev company he again encountered Markova. He was still spellbound by her dancing, as he had been after seeing her in the Kennington Pantomime in 1920, on which occasion he had spent a whole shilling of his precious pocket money to buy her a bunch of white chrysanthemums, leaving them at the stage door with the words 'from an unknown admirer'.

However he was baffled by the little girl's habitual seriousness and tried to dispel it, not as previously at Astafieva's classes by teasing her and pulling her hair but with bribes of cream teas and Sunday trips to the cinema. Recalling the first time he partnered Markova, Dolin says, 'She was fearless in my arms. Together we gave each other a supreme confidence and I knew instinctively that this was no ordinary being I held'. His general view on partnering is that the danseur should have a more mature quality than the danseuse to enable him to show her off to better advantage. "He must always stand firmly on his two feet in readiness to support the ballerina on pointe. He should never appear slimmer or younger than the ballerina."

These were the rules that laid the foundation of the twenty year Markova Dolin partnership which was unique not only in its duration but for the marked contrast of personality of the partners.

Away from the theatre Dolin confesses he likes 'doing all the things a dancer should not, such as smoking to excess and attending late night parties' at which his favourite drink is brandy and ginger ale.

He likes people, 'particularly theatre people' and has friends in every branch of show business, including film star Clifton Webb. Between the wars he was an habitu  of the Savoy Grill, but now, with the passing of some of its prominent patrons he feels that its atmosphere is subtly changed.

Always immaculately clad, it is typical of Dolin that he makes his London home in the heart of Mayfair.

However, like most dancers he finds it impossible to forget work completely and in his Curzon St. flat the painting of Taglioni and Mazilier by Lepolpe has a place of honour.

This year Dolin made his farewell performance as Satan in *Job*. His future has always been phenomenally difficult to forecast. At every crossroads in his career he has attempted and so often achieved what to everyone else appeared an impossibility.

Which other danseur has performed in ballerina blocked point shoes Dolin did in *Les Facheux*? Who else can claim to have literally leapt to fame in a Chanel swimsuit? Who else could have gone straight from the Diaghilev ballet into intimate revue, or dared to present classical pas de deux in Harringay arena? Only Dolin could have the faith and optimism necessary to found a major ballet company in a time of cold war and financial crises.

Perhaps after all we have found the secret of his wizardry and when we can predict his next move then we will have lost our beloved Peter Pan.

Sonia Roberts

Dance with the Pharaohs

contd. from page 13

stronger resemblance than any other dance to many of the ancient records. It is a blood sister of the *Macomba* of Brazil and South America, and is called the Zar. Both are descendants from sacrificial rituals amongst the natives of Central Africa but whereas the *Macomba*, continued amongst the Negroes, develops into a mass hysteria the Zar remains an art and a specialised cult. The members of the cult believe that they are possessed by the devil and witches. Their ferocious dance in their rituals is an attempt to rid themselves of some of their evil spirits.

Anyone can organise a "Zar",

by hiring a Zar dancer and inviting some people to watch. After food and drink have been served the dancer, usually a man, will start to dance. Part of the cult is never to cut their hair. They wear it in a tight chignon under their turbans. For the Zar they unwind their hair, and like a tousled mop it adds frenzy to their agitated movements of the head. The Zar has carefully studied movements. It is danced by a single person, or groups of people.

Invariably in large gatherings it will finish with the mass of onlookers being seized by the exciting rhythm, and hysteria will catch them as it does in the *Macomba*, but at least the Zar has a stylised beginning. Recently some well known French dancers visited a large

Zar that was organised in the Mouski, the heart of the native quarter in Cairo. One of them became so lost in his enthusiasm for the dance that he allowed himself to be carried away by the mob. It was two days before his friends found him again, still wandering in a trance. When he was disturbed, he immediately fainted and it was several days before he was himself again. Such are the powers of the Zar. I have witnessed the same spectacles many times here and in Brazil, especially when Europeans become involved. They innocently let themselves become influenced by the agitation of the dance, but before they know where they are they are completely lost. A native can stand the tension for a longer period and will come out

of the influence much quicker.

A group of research workers have been studying ancient Egyptian music. They have managed to trace the formation of the ancient musical instruments into those in use today. In spite of the numerous other civilisations that have passed over Egyptian history, basically the country has not changed, and it is indeed reasonable to believe in view of recent discoveries that it will be possible to reconstruct some of the ancient dances and rituals. When this has been accomplished I think a service will have been rendered to the modern dance. For only when we completely understand what has passed before can we expect to advance artistically.

Ballet 5. By Serge Lido (Art et Industrie, Paris).

WHAT first struck me on looking at the ninety eight photographs in this delightful book was the exceptional quality of the reproduction—such velvety tones, graduating from blacks of the utmost density to dazzling whites, do full justice to the photographer's art, and are all too rarely seen in this country. The four coloured plates are not up to the same standard.

Three ballerinas, Markova, Chauviré, and Tallchief, contribute short essays on the evolution of the classical ballet, and Lidova gives a resumé of the year's events on the Continent. This is reflected in the illustrations which commence with the Sadler's Wells visit to the Paris Opera in September, 1954, and include shots of such major companies as De Cuevas and New York City, besides a number of national dance groups.

My favourites are two classical poses: Tcherina—not in black tights—and an enchanting one of that enchantress, Markova; also some mysterious and dramatic pictures of *Rinaldo and Armida*, with the whisper of a Mona Lisa smile on the face of the lovely Svetlana Beriosova.

★ LINDA GRAEME

Helen, Ballet Student. By Linda Graeme. (Hutchinson, 7s. 6d.)

This well told junior novel concerns a ballet school obviously based on that of Mme. Rambert's. The heroine, after a successful student period and a number of adventures and difficulties, not all balletic, joins a touring company and ultimately attains ballerina roles and performance before royalty.

The Ballet of the Second Empire, 1847-1858. By Ivor Guest. (A. & C. Black, 25s.).

THIS is a fascinating book and one that I found difficult to put down; for, whereas, in Ivor Guest's companion work for 1857-1870, we watched the glow of the last embers of the Romantic Period in Paris flicker and die, in the eleven years now covered, the flames are still leaping fitfully. Taglioni, it is true, has danced for the last time, and is only to be seen as an elderly lady, grey-haired, wearing a black striped dress, as she makes notes on a large sheet of paper during an examination of the corps de ballet, afterwards putting a promising young dancer through her paces. But though Grisi is soon to retire, Cerrito is still at her zenith, and Rosati, Bogdanova, and Ferraris are some of the younger ballerinas; Perrot, Merante, Petipa (Lucien), and Saint-Léon are among their partners and choreographers; and Gautier is their chronicler. Though the scene is just as colourful, it is not quite so crowded as in the earlier volume and, perhaps for that reason, the writer's style is more flowing. But everything is here; the ballets, the triumphs, the intrigues, and what those who saw it all thought and said about it. Grisi sings at the end of a ballet in a pure, true soprano; electric light is used for the first time for a scenic effect; and too many of the bouquets that were showered on the stage, on a not particularly successful first night, were found to come from a box full of dancers' mothers!

The illustrations from drawings of the time are well chosen, while the many caricatures by Marcelin must have been devastating revelations of the idiosyncrasies of their subjects. The attractive format of the book is a credit to its publishers.

Ballets Past & Present. By Cyril Beaumont (Putnam, 21s.).

Anyone who finds it necessary from time to time to refer to accounts of a particular ballet, past or present, knows how difficult it is to come by full and exact details unless, with a sigh of relief, he discovers the title is included in one of Mr. Beaumont's books. For there, in either the *Complete Book of Ballets*, the *Supplement*, or *Ballets of Today*, he will find it all set out with historical details and dates, the original cast list, and a careful description of the action and settings.

The latest book includes a section devoted to Robert Helpmann and other modern choreographers, as well as a number of ballets from the Soviet repertoire and several from the "Golden Age" which are connected with such ballerinas as Zucchi and Kchesinska, and where the author has found new information. There are many excellent photographs, it is interesting to see the Soviet settings of *Cinderella*, and to compare an old lithograph of *A Folk Tale* with the present Royal Danish Ballet production. This book with its predecessors now form a quartet that is as complete as anything in this incomplete world of ballet.

★ ARNOLD L. HASKELL

Ballet Annual, 1956. Ed. Arnold L. Haskell (A. & C. Black, 21s.).

One of the many pleasant signs that Christmas is not far off is the appearance of the tenth issue of *Ballet Annual*, an edition which is well up to standard. There are the regular features such as the long and critical survey by Arnold Haskell, assisted by Mary Clarke, of the year's events in England, including full reports of the Sadler's Wells and Theatre Ballets, Rambert, and Festival Ballet, Paris Opera Ballet and other visiting companies; while in his survey of Ballet Workshop, G. B. L. Wilson salutes the passing of the Mercury Theatre. There are also articles on the ballet scene in the Dominions and abroad. Celebrated people write on other celebrated people, while, in a Sketch for a Portrait of Constant Lambert, Michael Ayrton shows with relish and understanding, something of the gusto for life, the magnificent absurdities, of that complex master of all that pertained to music for the ballet. Among the many other features the most exciting, for me, were the pages devoted to the Diaghilev Exhibition. Here something is re-captured of what has become, all too soon, a splendid and nostalgic memory.

BOOKS

The colour photograph is not too successful. The beautiful legs of Beryl Grey seem to elude *Ballet Annual*: on a previous cover they were a murky blue, now they hardly exist. Otherwise, the standard of the illustrations is high.

★ A. H. FRANKS

Ballet. A Decade of Endeavour. Ed. A. H. Franks, (Burke, 18s.).

This book contains an account of many of the most important events and developments of the ten years since the war—a period during which ballet became a popular theatrical art instead of an entertainment for the few. These years have brought many new developments and influences, and there has now been time for the various distinguished contributors to this book to assess, from the particular sphere in which they are most interested, the value of these developments and their possible future effects. The three directors of English ballet, de Valois, Rambert and Dolin, write of their ambitions and difficulties. The eminent critic of *The Times* discourses on music, Francis Marshall on decoration, and Mary Clarke on books. There are two excellent articles on ballet in America by P. W. Manchester and Lillian Moore, but why in those on France is there little or no mention made of the De Cuevas Company? The contributions are, sometimes a little uneven, as is inevitable in a book of this description; and some of the critics are a little ponderous in describing their ideal ballet, but there is a delicious article by Donald Wray on the critics. I was glad to see a chapter on male dancing by E. Kelland-Espinosa, for the male in ballet is still badly neglected in ballet literature. The editor, who is also a director of *The Dancing Times*, writes two articles that are stimulating and thoughtful, for his viewpoint is always sane and unbiassed. There are 40 photographic illustrations.

PIGEON CROWLE

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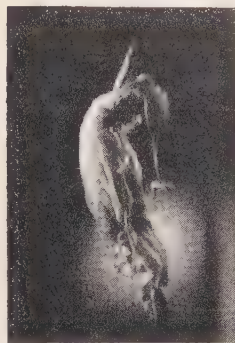
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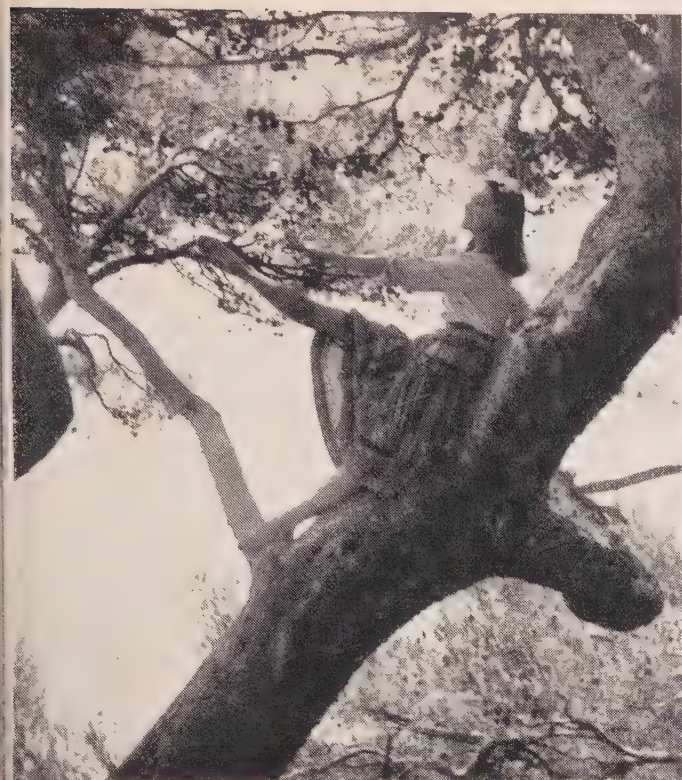
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COLLINS



Fonteyn on holiday in the South of France from *Enter the Ballerina* by Pigeon Crowle Photo: Paul Popper

★ PIGEON CROWLE

Enter the Ballerina. By Pigeon Crowle. (Faber & Faber, 15s.)

PIGEON Crowle needs no introduction to the readers of *BALLET TODAY*. Her interesting articles and book reviews have long been a regular and popular feature. Once again, in this her latest book, just published, she holds us enthralled with her stories of seven famous ballerinas.

In the first of these, Tamara Karsavina, a vivid picture is given of the life of a child and young dancer against the glittering background of Imperial Russia. In the second, Alexandra Danilova marks a period of transition and change, shadowed by revolution; while with Violetta Elvin, trained at the famous Bolshoi Ballet School, the making of a Soviet ballerina is seen. Yet, as the writer is careful to show, the great tradition of Russian ballet remains unbroken and unchanged.

Alicia Markova, Margot Fonteyn, Maria Tallchief and Svetlana Beriosova all provide delightful material for other

chapters; and a particularly interesting feature is the manner in which the gifted young students and famous dancers, having such a variety of colourful backgrounds meet and inspire one another. The reader is taken behind the scenes in the ballet world, and one feels that each ballerina has personally recounted the big and small events—as well as the amusing episodes—that have gone to make each career. So many writers compile what can only be termed a "catalogue" of a dancer's accomplishments and leave it at that. One does not feel that with this book and only Beriosova herself could have described so vividly and so movingly what it meant to her as a young dancer to be interpreting a great role for the first time, and her thoughts and feelings as she leaves the shelter of the wings. There are over forty varied and unusual illustrations from photographs, including a coloured frontispiece. I can heartily recommend this book, which will make an interesting and charming Christmas gift.

Reviewed by the Editor

Lorna Hill

This story of a ballet company on tour will make a delightful Christmas gift. It introduces Annette and Maximilian Dancy of *Dancing Peel* to several new friends. *Colour wrapper and frontispiece, eight full-page line illustrations by Esme Verity.* 8s 6d

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that no one's had time to adopt her, so now's your chance. Go back-stage and ask her. She might give you a pair of her old point-shoes. Go on!"

Mimi shrank back into her seat.

"Oh, no! I daren't."

"Don't be so silly. Why ever not?"

"I just daren't. that's all."

"O.K. I'll ask her for you."

"Oh, no! Please, please" Mimi was obviously so distressed at the very idea that Brenda shrugged her shoulders.

"Very well, but don't say you haven't had the chance. Someone else will snap her up once they hear of this afternoon. Mark my words!"

Back at Colet Gardens, Brenda discussed Mimi with Trudi, her best friend.

"She's a nice kid, and ever such a good dancer, but so terribly shy. Take this mascot business—she hasn't the self-confidence to ask for one, and until she has one, she just won't get any self-confidence. It's a vicious circle!"

Suddenly Trudi had an idea. She drew Brenda into a quiet corner and they talked together in whispers

"Oh, Trudi—it's a good idea, but she'll never swallow it," said Brenda at length. "She just wouldn't be taken in. Nobody would."

"Mimi Carter will be taken in, you'll see," said Trudi. "She hasn't much of a sense of humour. She'll swallow it with her mouth open!"

"O.K. It's your funeral," shrugged Brenda. "Anyway, I don't see that it can do any harm."

When Mimi arrived at Colet Gardens the following day, she found the dressing-room in an upheaval. The centre table was covered with old shoes, ancient tights, hair-bands, and a lot of other things besides. Brenda and Trudi were turning over these objects.

"They've been clearing out the Lost Prop Cupboard," announced Brenda. "Any offers! Gosh, what a lot of junk! Quite a few interesting things besides though. Remember that exhibition they had a year or so ago in the Baylis Hall?"

Mimi shook her head.

"No—it must have been before my time."

"Before ours, too, as a matter of fact," said Brenda. "But everyone's heard of it. Well, there are quite a few interesting exhibits tucked away in that old Prop cupboard. Like this one, for instance." She held up a faded envelope. "Guess what's in here."

Again Mimi shook her head.

"I don't know."

"Well, it's a feather. Look, it says on the envelope: 'A feather from the Dying Swan head-dress of the great dancer, Anna Pavlova 1910.'"

"What?" Mimi was all alert now. "You mean—you mean that inside the envelope there is a feather that really belonged to Madame Pavlova?"

"That's right." Trudi opened the envelope and took out of it a small white feather. "Here it is."

"And they've thrown it out of the Lost Prop cupboard? They've thrown it away?"

"Yes, my dear. Such is life!" said Brenda with a sigh. "How the Great Ones perish and become forgotten! Would you like it for your mascot? Or perhaps you've thought of something better."

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" Mimi took the feather and held it to her breast. (What better mascot could any budding dancer ask for than a feather out of Pavlova's crown?). "Oh, thank you, thank you, both of you! You don't know how happy you've made me!" She rushed out of the room, leaving her friends staring after her.

"Gosh! I had no idea it would work so well!" Brenda's voice was awestricken. "I feel it's an awful shame—"

"Not a bit of it!" said Trudi briskly. "She's got her mascot now. She'll be ever so full of confidence, and her dancing will go up by leaps and bounds. You'll see!"

And now the all important day had arrived—the Afternoon of Ballet. All the High Ups were there—the Director of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, the Director of the School, The Head Mistress, and, of course, all the Staff.

Mimi danced the Christmas Tree Fairy as she had never danced it before. How could she do otherwise, when she had her mascot—her swan's feather—sewn lovingly into the bodice of her ballet-dress? She remembered that Pavlova had once been a young and trembling girl, just like herself, and she took heart, and gave of her very best. If she had been in the audience, she would have heard the comments of the High Ups on her dancing.

continued on page 34

Christmas Carol

CALMANISMS

Our artist depicts below some quotations from Montague Calman's articles during 1955.

I dreamt I stood at the Gates of Heaven, facing the Editor of **BALLET TODAY** who sat in the Chair of Judgment. "Give me a review of your outstanding ballet experiences of 1955", was the celestial command. I had left my notebook behind as for the journey through outer space one always travels light. What *could* I remember from all the year's activity?

My first thought was of an exciting night at Covent Garden. It was during Act 2 of the opera *The Midsummer Marriage*. Here composer Michael Tippett gave us superbly balletic music for the three dances, *The Earth in Autumn*, *The Waters in Winter* and *The Air in the Spring*. This was a self-contained ballet work, complete in itself, with a richly melodic choral piece. Let us hope that Ninette de Valois introduces this richly endowed work into the Sadler's Wells repertory.

On another memorable evening at the Royal Opera House the Master of the Queen's Music conducted his own great *Checkmate*. How vividly he brought out the dynamic dance drama of this brilliant Bliss ballet. I shall never tire of hearing this stark music and seeing Grey dance to it.

SIMPLE JOYS

Then my mind travelled from the polished sophistication of *Checkmate* to the naive simplicity of the Yugo Slavian National Opera and Ballet Company. They brought an enchanting freshness to the Stoll Theatre with *The Devil in the Village*. Fran Lhota, who was a pupil of Dvorak, knows how to give dancers bouyant movement-for-movement music. While the rich earthy comedy of the folkish choreography was matched by his clever and humorous score.

Who can forget Antonio's visit? His was a performance both unique and artistic, yet spoilt by the intrusion of a dreadful pit orchestra. Sickly strings do not soothe Antonio, that noble savage.

At the Sadler's Wells Theatre the welcome revival of *The Rake's Progress* gave me a chance to hear again Gavin Gordon's imaginative score. The graphic narrative in the music remains vividly in my mind. Why does not someone commission Gordon to write the music for a new ballet instead of turning to the dead for unsuitable works?

NEW WORKS

"This is all very well," radios my subconscious, "but what of all those new ballets in 1955? Why did you not think of them at the beginning?"

Why, for instance, was not

Alan Rawsthorne's *Madame Chrysanthème* the great ballet of the year? The overscored music crammed full of notes crowded out any dramatic continuity. I found his score monotonous. For me it was not in the same class as Ashton's inspired choreographic treatment of Pierre Loti's *Madame Butterfly* theme.

I found *Rinaldo and Armida* thin-blooded for that warm hearted composer Malcolm Arnold. A coldly impersonal score for a poetical idea spoilt this ballet musically. So again this was not in the forefront of my mind.

Nor too, would I consciously recall memories of *Variations on a Theme of Purcell*. Though unlike the other two new ballets, here I cannot blame the composer. Benjamin Britten's *Young Person's Guide* has served the purpose for which it was written. If Ashton chose the music he alone must shoulder the blame for taking unballetic rhythms for his choreography.

OF GOOD CHEER

"Go back to the fires of the Earth," shouted the Editor to me. "You surely can find *something* kind to say if you read your notebook. Down you go!"

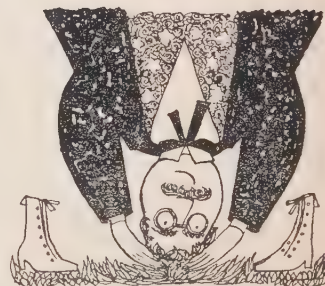
Well, you know, I did look up my notes and I saw some pleasure there. I did enjoy these delightful ballets at the Sadler's Wells Theatre: The blood curdling score *Blood Wedding* (Aplvor), and Ravel's romance in *Beauty and the Beast*. While at the Royal Opera House, the circus-like romp *Ballabile* (Chabrier), the elegant *Les Patineurs* (Mayerbeer), and William Walton's entertaining *Facade*, were fun, and were well performed.

GOING UP PLEASE ?

On my way up to the Editor, I awoke and to my surprise found myself writing this feature. I have made no alterations now that I am conscious because I agree with my subconscious mind. All I can add is that 1955 was an average year, musically undistinguished. Yet there was promise from Covent Garden in their plan for additional guest conductors. And the Sadler's Wells in their vitality and virility in their choice of repertoire at Islington deserve praise. Disappointing was the London Festival Ballet's season at the Festival Hall; still better things next year, no doubt.

All I need add is: I wish all my readers, including certainly those who so kindly write to me, agreeing or criticising, a very Merry Christmas and a New Year full of Elevating Balletic Entertainment.

Montague Calman



Left to right

"The music for the hornpipe was dehydrated and shallow . . . like insipid tea from a cold pot"

"Let Verdi's body be exhumed and re-buried in a sound proof coffin, I feel sorry for his tossing corpse."

"The opening orchestral bars were as if a wife threw curtain rings across a room, her husband bashed away at the dinner gong. . . ."

"For the next performance I hope a tuning fork prevents the orchestra from sounding flat."

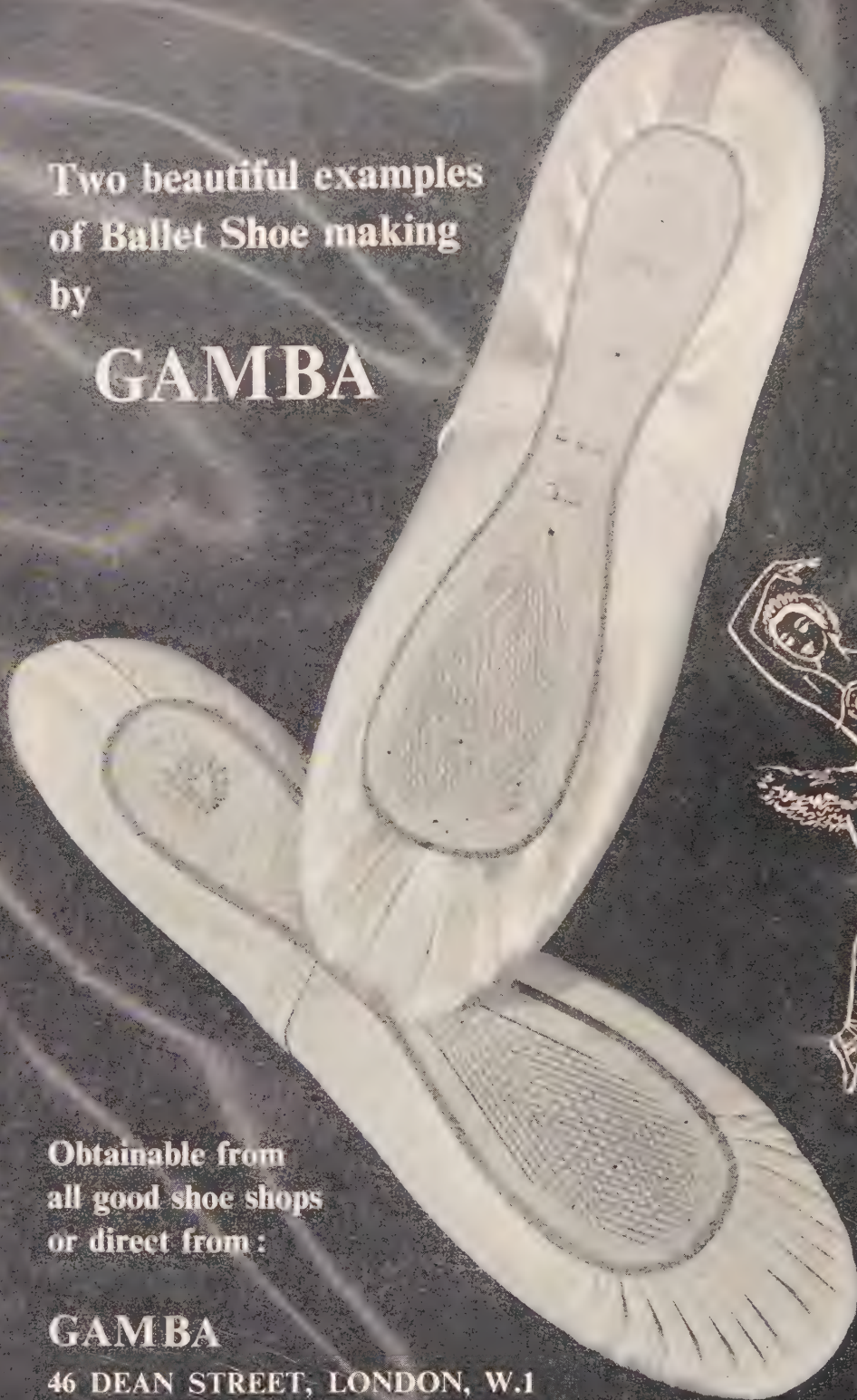
"The syrup of a restaurant tea orchestra."

"A critic has to be something of an Alice in Wonderland for only by standing on his head can he sometimes see clearly what the current trend is of music in the ballet world."

Sketches by Justin.

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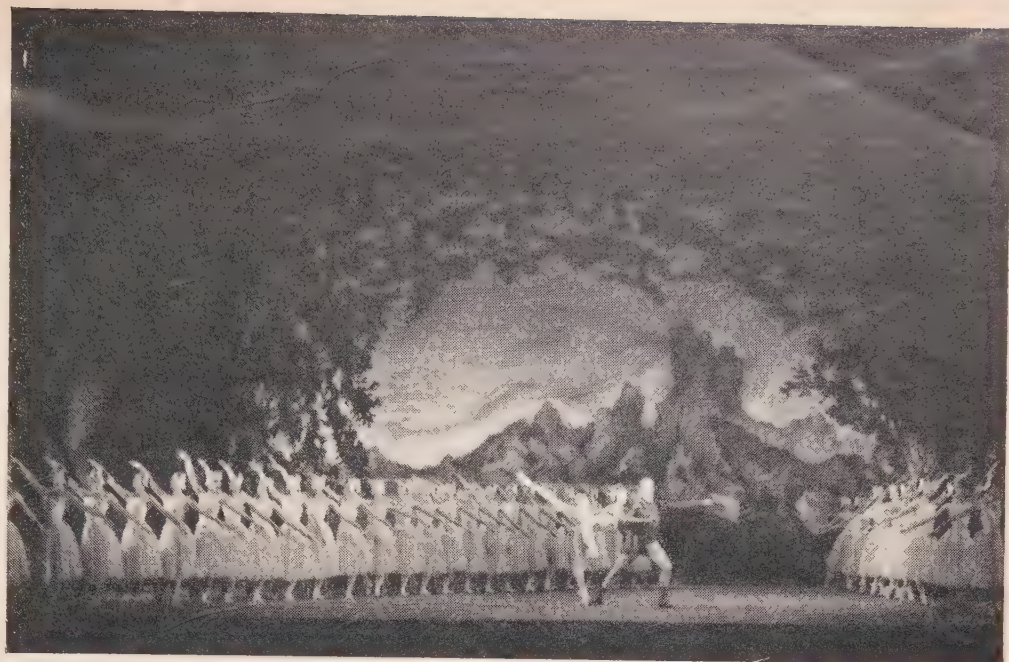
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NEW RECORDS FOR CHRISTMAS

IT is that hour or so when everyone is relaxed in their armchairs after a thoroughly good Christmas dinner—reflecting on the tastiness of the turkey, the spiciness of the mincepies or the cheer and friendliness the brandy gave to the flaming Christmas pudding—that an LP record, with its minimum fuss and bother, can round off and perfect the atmosphere of content. Why not give one as a general family present? The choice is wide this month, from Lully to Khachaturian as well as a special Shakespearean interest, so I hope that the following may help you.

An essentially Christmas ballet is, of course, *The Nutcracker* which Mercury gives us complete on OL-2-101. The normal suite omits so many enchanting items that, after hearing these two discs, you wonder how it was you were content with only a selection. I can certainly recommend Dorati's fine performance, which brings out the colouring in Tchaikovsky's orchestration most beautifully. The recording is clear and bright—the strings are a little hard on occasion but that did not detract from my enjoyment.

An attractive present for Ballet-cum-Shakespearean friends is the Old Vic's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, HMV. ALP 1262-4. It may not be great Shakespeare but it is above the normal competent level generally experienced these plays. Its particular interest to ballet-goers is Robert Helpmann as Oberon and Moira Shearer as Titania. His performance is very fine by any standard and although Shearer's falls far below at this opening stage of her new career, her voice has real beauty. Sir Malcolm Sargent's



Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes *Swan Lake Act II*

handling of the incidental music in its proper setting, is really delightful.

Of all the recordings of *Scheherazade* there are none that I have enjoyed to the same extent as Ansermet's, with the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra, Decca LXT 5082. A few people may feel that there is insufficient power in the final build-up of the crescendo but even they will be enraptured with his clear but infinitely delicate painting of tone-colour, and phrasing. The recording is excellent—I consider it a "must".

For those who prefer the power and grandeur of Beethoven, there is the *Eroica Symphony*, chosen by Lifar for his ballet, *A la Memoire d'un Héros*. Kempen and the Berlin P.O., Philips ABL 3013, do not take any liberties with this awe-inspiring work—he follows the score with a faithfulness lacking in many other recordings, so

that here we have, in my opinion, the nearest to the composer's intentions. It is finely recorded.

For sheer gaiety, it is hard to beat the Strauss brothers. The four intriguing and really beautiful waltzes on Philips NBR 6008, are a little less wellknown than many and Salmhofer, conducting, the Vienna S.O., gets that fascinating lilt which is so essential. The Acceleration Waltz conjures up Lichine's *Graduation Ball*, which I doubt if I shall ever tire of seeing.

I regret not having seen Skibine's ballet, *The Prisoner in the Caucasus*, more often. The decor took one back to the richness of the days of Diaghilev and Bakst. The choreography had an invention which gave a life and meaning to Khachaturian's music—originally composed for the ballet, *Gayaneh*. On this ten inch disc, Columbia 33C1041, the composer himself conducts the Philharmonia and

apart from it being an authoritative rendering, it is a much more attractive one than the previous two issues.

A suite from Cranko's *The Lady and the Fool* is most welcome, Decca LW 5208—in fact anything that reminds us so enchantingly of Beryl Grey, is always most welcome. How well Mackerras has arranged this melodious and exciting but lesser known Verdi—it is stirring and vital, with a firm beat making it ideal for ballet. Robert Irving, the New S.O. and the recording do justice to it—it's a winner!

In addition, I can also recommend in every way: *Carnaval*, Columbia 33CX1283; *Swan Lake*, Columbia SEL1532.

So ends my choice for December—may it add to your pleasure this Christmas season. B.C.

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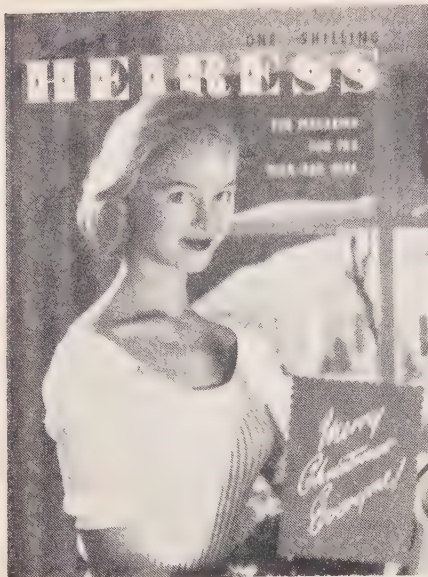
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POST ORDERS RECEIVE PROMPT ATTENTION

"That little girl with the dark eyes—yes, Mimi Carter. She's come on a lot just lately, hasn't she? . . . almost time she had a little stage experience . . . How old? Fifteen? I thought she was younger. Quite time, then. What about the Dog in *Wedding Bouquet* . . . Her physique has improved enormously, and she looks a great deal more sure of herself . . . Quite a good style . . . Yes, you tell her yourself, Miss Willan . . ."

Although Mimi herself didn't hear these comments, trust Brenda Dickson to overhear.

"Mimi!" she burst out as soon as her friend came off stage. "Guess what! They're planning to do *The Wedding Bouquet*—and you're to be the Dog! They're even taking it—the ballet, I mean—over to America. How's that for luck?"

Mimi's hand felt for the feather, nestling so softly at her breast.

"Yes, and some more news," went on the irrepressible Brenda. "I don't suppose you looked at the notice-board in the Garden Room as you came up to the Baylis? . . . No, I thought not! Well, you'd better have a glance as you go down, because Marlene Scott's been crossed off as one of the *Sleeping Beauty* Pages (she's been taken into the Opera Ballet), and you're down in her place. Rehearsal tomorrow morning, and you're on at night, so you'll have to be smart to get it off by then."

"Oh, no!" I can't believe it!" cried Mimi, bursting into tears partly of joy, and partly of reaction because the All-important Afternoon or Ballet was over. "It's too wonderful!"

On Christmas Eve, after the matinée, Mimi collected her very first pay-envelope. In it was the money she had earned for three performances, since to-night's was included. Holding it close, she left the theatre and found a little shop in a side street. In the window was a notice, surrounded by tinsel and holly:

"Last minute Xmas Presents! Buy your Man a Musical Tie—9/11d, reduced to 5/11d. A gift in every sense of the word! . . . And what about the Missis? Can't leave her out! Think she'd like a Head-scarf? Sure! They all do! Come inside and choose one from a galaxy of smashing colours!"

Mimi went inside and bought a musical tie for her Dad. It had two whole bars of La Bohème upon it (the little shop, nestling in the shadow of the great Opera House, was opera-minded!) For her Mam, she bought a head-scarf covered all over with ballerinas.

"Fonteyn, Shearer, and Beryl Whatsher name—all the lot!" said the man from behind the counter. "There you are, missy! Dirt cheap at five-and-eleven-a-half. Between you and me it's below cost price. Lose on it meself, but I always likes to oblige a customer. Wrap 'em up for you, missy?"

"Oh, yes," said Mimi, "and could you please post them for me too. I'd do it myself if I had time . . . Oh, the address . . . It's Mr. and Mrs. Carter, 193 Cheviot View, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. You won't forget, will you? It's very important."

"Don't you worry, missy. I'll post 'em with me own 'and. Your Mum and your Dad'll get 'em by tomorrow morning's post. Happy Christmas to you, missy! Cheerio!"

On Christmas Day, Mimi went with crowds of other worshippers to Morning Service at St. Martin-in-the-Fields. As she knelt in the famous church, she said a little prayer of thanks to God for her good fortune.

"Please, God," she prayed, "thank You for all the wonderful things that have happened to me, and most of all thank You for sending me Madame Pavlova's swan's feather. And please God, bless Madame Pavlova, herself, wherever she is. Amen!"

After the service, she walked slowly back to the hostel, and on her way she passed through Trafalgar Square, where, as usual, there was a crowd of people feeding the pigeons. It made you laugh to see the birds strutting about so importantly! There were seagulls, too. They weren't nearly so tame, however, and most of them stayed circling in the air. One alighted right on the top of Nelson's column, and stood perched on the admiral's cocked hat, preening his feathers. He looked down at the little girl below, and uttered his plaintive mewling cry. He didn't know, any more than she did, that the feather that had brought her luck was one of his own breast feathers, picked up by Trudy herself on her walk!

Now if you think that this made any difference to Mimi's career, then you are quite mistaken. It is not the mascot itself that counts, but what that mascot stands for. Mimi's little white feather that would be sewn into each successive ballet-dress, and would share all her triumphs, this feather stood for all that was best in dancing—the persistence, the beauty, the integrity, the self-denial, the sheer hard work—in short, all those qualities that the great dancer, Anna Pavlova, possessed to a high degree. With this example before her, how could Mimi go wrong? The fact that her mascot was a seagull's feather, picked up from a London pavement, mattered not one jot!

— END —

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BALLET GUIDE

DECEMBER

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

Owing to the difficulties in printing and distributing during the Christmas holidays, our next issue will be published on 12th January. This will enable us to report on the Sadler's Wells return to Covent Garden, and other Companies performances during Christmas and early January. **PLEASE REMEMBER THE DATE.**

Handwritten musical notation on two staves. The top staff begins with a treble clef and contains several measures of music with notes, rests, and bar lines. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef and also contains several measures of music with notes, rests, and bar lines. The notation is somewhat stylized and appears to be a personal or working manuscript.

to the incredible web of sound
of a symphony.

take kindly to learning things by sitting down, every one who has applied himself to this system for an hour or so becomes fascinated, and willing to do the necessary work to be proficient in it.

musical notation. He uses as much as possible the musical signs with which most people are already familiar, the five staves, the bar lines, all the musical accents and phrase marks and the musical terms to denote the quality of tone needed by any passage; these last apply equally well to the qualities of movement needed to perform steps or parts of steps, such as pp, st, mf, mff, pizzicato, legato, etc.

In the illustration you see 4 bars of the Covent Garden production of *The Lady and the Fool*. The top stave gives a 'thinned out' arrangement of the music with the bass raised to the treble clef to save space, next is the part of The Lady, the other staves apply to the other dancers, their steps, location and pattern. The number of staves used depends on the number of different things going on at the same time, and one can see at a glance what is going on and where at any moment, how the repeats fit in and the density of

Above:
Enchainment in two versions (1) Short (2) Analysed.

Left:
Extract from Lady and the Fool by kind permission of John Cranko.

Handwritten musical score for "The Sailors Song". The score is written on ten staves, grouped into four sections: 2 Sailors, 2 Debs., 10 Girls, and 10 Boys. A Solo section is at the bottom. The music is in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The lyrics "The Sailors Song" are written at the top. The Solo section is marked "Solo" and "Loc.".

THE BENESH SYSTEM

movement over all.

It is interesting to note that the score of the dancing takes no more space than the orchestral score.

This notation is now being taught in the Sadler's Wells School and a point of great interest arises from the early classes. To look at the spidery little lines, dots, and crosses scattered between the staves one might well feel that unless this was written with great exactitude it would be unreadable, or at least open to grave misreading, but it appears that even the carelessly written exercises can be read correctly.

In this method you have the possibility of two versions, one for professional dancers which is the quickest and simplest and one more detailed for analytical and teaching purposes, or for new or strange styles. For instance, for a professional it is only necessary to show the position of hands and feet to indicate an arabesque, because given the style of classical ballet it is impossible to get hands or feet into those same places in any other way than by an arabesque. At the same time it is possible to notate every point of the body at that position if need be.

The second illustration shows the difference between the two versions on this short enchainement:—Glissade derrière, assemblée over, pas de basque glissé en avant.

Naturally the system must be proved over several years, but the signs are auspicious because the dancers learning it now are

enthusiastic. They feel as they write, what goes on the paper has some visual relationship with the movements which they make—enough to give them considerable encouragement from the very first lesson in tackling what is bound to involve a lot of work.

Think of the advantages of a dance notation in *general use*, apart from the obvious one of recording full sized ballets. Records could be kept of classes by the best teachers, thus methods of teaching could be preserved without the distortion attendant on passing down through individuals. Choreographers, or aspirants to that title, could note down dances, formations, enchainements as they occurred to them, whole ballets can be scripted whilst out of work, thus avoiding the usual desperate congestion on the creative side with which every choreographer is all too familiar. Teachers would catch for ever the occasional excellent numbers that occur in school shows. Ballet Clubs could afford the occasional professional production because it could be reproduced at any time without further expense. It would save endless time in reproduction and endless sweat for dancers who could learn their parts before rehearsal and so leave time at last for the nuances of production. In fact dancers might almost be able to give time to becoming artists instead of pouring all their energy into the physical act of dancing. They could obtain copies of any role they wished to study without waiting for the whim of a director or choreographer to give them the chance. The time

would come when choreographers would submit scores to Artistic Directors who would be able to judge from these whether the ballets were worth a trial. Unlucky choreographers born before or out of their time will be able to leave their works to the judgment of posterity.

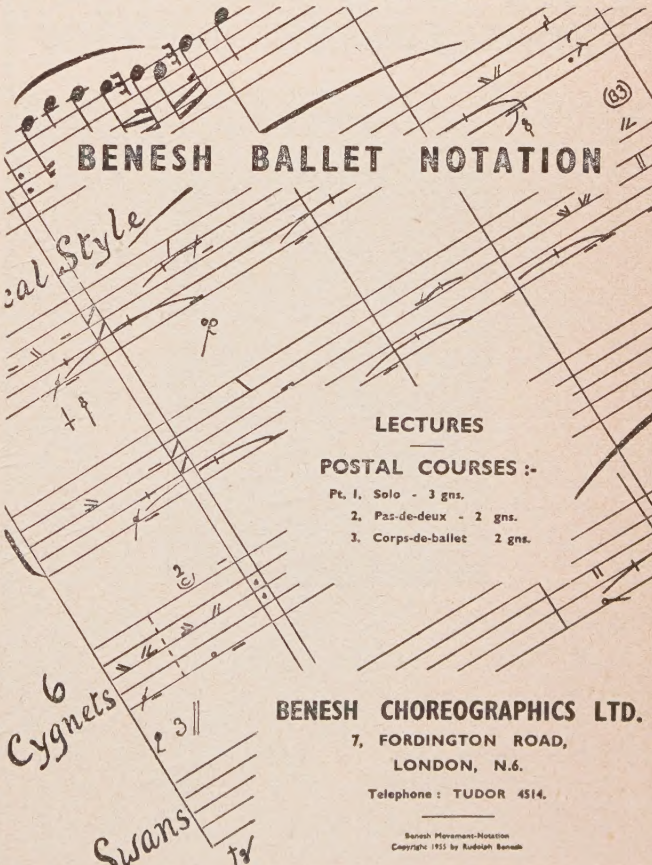
Any real dance notation should eventually confer these benefits, and thus raise the status of the art considerably.

But however good a notation may seem to its creators, it must appeal to a sufficient number of dancers to start the ball rolling, who will learn it and use it in day

to day work and training and infect others with their enthusiasm.

It is very early days to judge yet but that seems to be exactly what is happening in the case of the Benesh System. I do not believe that any other system has so far actively appealed to dancers, fascinated them in sufficient numbers to spread the gospel. It may be that there will be room, and a use for more than one type of notation, only time will show. But the Benesh system seems to me to have the simplicity, logic and adaptability which so often belong to things which endure and grow.

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Ann Hutchinson, President of The Dance Notation Bureau in New York, has given "Ballet Today" a series of interviews describing this system of instruction.

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THE GLASS SLIPPER

DANCE AT VERSAILLES

SI PARIS M'ÉTAIS CONTÉ

THE *Glass Slipper*, co-starring Leslie Caron and Michael Wilding is a new version of the old and well-loved story of Cinderella. Caron creates, with artless simplicity, the forlorn bedraggled waif whose dreams come true.

One dance sequence takes place in the kitchen of the Palace and the ballet's climax takes place at the top of a three-layer iced cake 30-feet high. The second ballet in this film revolves around the imaginary Egyptian princess Tehara, to whom gossip has Cinderella's prince betrothed, and it is in these sequences that the entire company of Roland Petit's Ballet de Paris appears.

Photo above: Leslie Caron and Michael Wilding.

* * *

SACHA Guitry compliments Xenia Palley and Vladimir Brosko who play the parts of Tamara Karsavina and Nijinsky, dancing in the *Sceptre de la Rose* in his new film *Si Paris m'étais conté*.

Photo Bottom right

* * *

THE young French star Violette Verdy has just made a short film, published by Radium Films, entitled *Dance at Versailles*, made at Versailles in the little open-air theatre

called "The Grotto". Michel Renault star dancer of the Paris Opera and a troupe of 16 dancers danced in the ballet, which was set to music by Bach, with choreography by Raymond Laroche—costumes by Léonor Fini. Another dance, the *Adagio* from an *Aria* by Bach, was shot in the colonnade of the Chateau itself. The costumes include Louis XIV head-dresses.

Photo Top right.

* * *

MICHAEL Panaieff, star of the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo for more than ten years, has been signed with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer as both actor and choreographer for *Gaby* for which he will create two new ballets.

Co-starring Leslie Caron and John Kerr, this will be Panaieff's Hollywood debut.

Today he runs his own Ballet Centre in Hollywood, where both dancers and dancing masters are listed among his pupils, and include such well-known personalities as Jeanmaire, Leslie Caron, Taina Elg, Nina Novak, Oleg Tupine, Roland Petit and Michael Kidd.

As an actor he will play himself—ballet master, and will be seen in rehearsal sequences with Miss Caron as well as back-stage settings of London's dance realm.

Gaby is being directed by Curtis Bernhardt and produced by Edwin H. Knopf in CinemaScope and colour with Perspecta Stereophonic Sound.

FILMS



ALL THE STARS

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